

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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LECTURES AND DISCOURSES.

BY THE
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PREFACE.

THERE is, I think, a unity of thought and design in the Lectures and Discourses herewith published which the titles they severally bear might fail to make plain. The causes which render men irreligious or indifferent to religion are in general not rational or intellectual, and are never wholly so; and this is the thought which has guided me in the lecture on Religious Indifference. In the discourse which follows I have made a brief survey of the controversy between Religion and Science, in which the causes of unbelief are considered from a more exclusively intellectual point of view. The lecture on God and Christ is preliminary and introductory to the statement and enforcement of Catholic Truth, which is the subject-matter of the discourses that follow. In the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth lectures I have

considered Christianity in its historical development, and have tried to show that the Church is Christianity in its objective, organic form. Protestantism, in its rise and decline, has presented itself to me as the most striking example of the failure which follows upon all attempts to give strength and permanence to Christian faith when historic Christianity, or the Catholic Church, is not recognized as the infallible and divinely-constituted organ of revealed truth.

PEORIA, March 25, 1882.

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LECTURES AND DISCOURSES.



I.

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

RELIGION is co-extensive with human thought and history. The idea of an intelligent cause is an element of all thinking, and hence to be rational is to believe in God; and if here and there men have doubted or denied His being they have also doubted and denied the existence of the external world. The attempt to found a philosophy of physical science upon the theory that nature does not exist would be madness; and the attempt to construct a system of thought or conduct upon the hypothesis that God is not would be folly. But we cannot think that God is without perceiving our dependence on Him; and this is the root and origin of all religion. Hence the fear lest religion should disappear from earth is as idle as would be the apprehension that the soul is in danger of losing the power to think or love.

Religion, therefore, is the necessary consequence of the idea of God which is impressed upon the

mind by the law of nature itself; and, since religion is an indispensable element in the life of man, it follows that it is the most essential and important element in his life. It is the law both of his thinking and his acting. He can no more escape from it than from God's presence, and the more truly human he is—the more he is under the control of reason and conscience—the more completely does he realize that religion is the very soul of his existence. If we consider the subject in the light of facts we find that the influence of religion has been paramount in human history. The peoples of the earth have come into social and political existence under the government of a priesthood, from whom they derived their first principles, morals, customs—in a word, the distinctive elements of character which it was their mission to develop during the course of ages. The organization of the family and of property, the government, intellectual and material progress, have invariably been intimately related to religious faith. This is true alike of the pantheistic religion of India, of the atheistic creed of China, of the monotheism of Mahomet, and of the worship of God in spirit and in truth as revealed to the world by Christ. Religion is the primal social bond. It gives ideals to the individual, the family, and the state, and thereby determines and fixes the ends and aims of life, and lays the foundations of morality. The power of religion is comparable to the force of the laws of nature; whereas philosophy is but a piece of human

mechanism, which depends for what worth and strength there may be in it upon the eternal basis of religious truth, even when it seems to conflict with its principles or attempts to weaken its action.

God is, and I am. These are not only the two truths of which I am most certain, but they contain all that is necessary for my happiness. If I knew all things, and should find that there is no God, the universe would be transformed, for me, into a boundless untruth and mockery. The cosmic would become chaotic, and to be unconscious would be the highest good. But once I know that God is, I rest in Him. That He is is enough both for my mind and my heart. In His divine presence I take the measure of all things. The veil that time and space hang before my eyes falls away ; the ages, with their freight of human souls and deeds, roll past and sink into eternity, and God remains. He alone is great; He alone is worthy of praise, of adoration, of love. That this should be so, and that men should be what they are, is the most inscrutable mystery. We dwell in an atmosphere of eternity, and in our hearts recognize the worthlessness of whatever comes to end ; and yet we live captives of sense and slaves of time, as though we had no mind or soul for things divine. Fatal charm of sensation, which robs us of forethought, which so entangles us in material surroundings that we go on in a kind of dream, as though this life were immortal, and our eyes are opened for the first

time when the grave that swallows us up yawns before us! And with what zest we play our little parts! We have no time to give to God and the soul. More important affairs demand our attention. We are busy buying and selling; we are building cities and railroads, getting and spending; we lay waste our powers, and live in anxious bondage to material wants "and formal fellowship of petty things."

"Rapine, avarice, expense—
This is idolatry; and these we adore.
Plain living and high thinking are no more.
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion, breathing household laws."

Is there hope? Can it be that men who have no worthier aims in life were ever meant to know God and the soul?

"We needs must love the highest when we see it," the poet says; and are we not forced to think that these busy men know and see nothing higher than what they sell over their counters or in their boards of trade, since such are the things they love? But it will be said in reply: Certainly this life of which you speak is not high; the aims of these people are not exalted; they seek money, pleasure, position; it is at best a sort of death in life, toil and trouble, in which of a hundred one succeeds, only to find that his success has not brought peace or happiness, has not even enlarged his thoughts, or deepened his sympathies, or purified his desires. Be it so. The world of these

people is at least a real world. They know that their god is an idol, but they know also that it is made of gold. They take things as they find them; they deal with facts and have definite aims; and this is the secret of the charm and fascination of this religion of the world. Though men recognize that it is a grovelling superstition, they still cling to it as a refuge from the misery of doubt and uncertainty. If God is, He is the highest, and to love Him and to give one's life wholly to this love would be perfect wisdom and perfect happiness. But (such seems to be the real thought of the multitude) we know that the world is, and we only believe that God is; and hence the religion of the world is stronger than the religion of God, as knowledge is more certain than faith, as a loaf of bread is better than imagination of a feast. Our feet rest upon matter, and matter is the breath and nourishment of life. From the earth our joys bubble forth, and the sun shines upon our sorrows. We are but threads in great Nature's woof, and all our thoughts and all our loves vibrate in unison with the universe of moving, all-embracing matter. And so these multitudes are caught and hang helpless in the web of material things, and give no heed to the high aspirations of the human heart, to its boundless yearnings and infinite hopes, but sink the soul in sensation and seek to persuade themselves that so they make the most of life. As a consequence the characteristic feature of our age is indifference to God and the soul. They are excluded from all

the great questions that agitate the public mind. When men speak of progress, of civilization, of morality, of education, they take a secular and utilitarian view of these subjects. True and good and beautiful is whatever makes this present life rich in pleasant sensations. The thoughts of the crowd are bounded by the horizon, and whatever may be above or beyond is held to be irrelevant. He who, in studying the civilization of a people, should make their faith or want of faith in God and the soul his standard would not be a man of this age ; and whosoever, in forming an estimate of national morality, should be guided by the Christian idea of sin would hardly escape ridicule. Horror of sin has almost died away, and in its place we have polemics against crime. Murder, theft, drunkenness, and adultery are denounced and sometimes punished, not because they are offences against God, but because they are hurtful to man. The father warns his child against these crimes, not because they will imperil the salvation of his soul, but because they will endanger his success in life. The religious test of morality is thus superseded by the social test. And so public opinion, in pronouncing upon the worth of a man's life, forms its judgment without regard to his religion or want of religion. Our saint is the saint of paganism—the man who has deserved well of his city or his country. In education we hold that the teaching of religious doctrines is an evil and an anachronism ; and religion, even where it is still found, is valued not for itself but as a

means of culture and a solace. But few pray, and the crowd doubts that prayer is heard, because when they ask for health, or money, or sensible delights these things are not granted to them. Of spiritual states and blessings they seem to have no conception at all, so infinitely far away are they from the thought that in these the chief good of life is to be sought and found. The great body even of nominal Christians live as though their religion were a dream or an^o untruth. In all things they give precedence to the concerns of this life. Their thoughts, desires, and labors move in the narrow circle of earth and centre in carnal things. They cannot even speak of religion without using unreal words—words that represent for them no living thought, or hope, or aim. Hence on this subject they are either altogether silent or fatally fall into cant. They deny God even in confessing their faith in Him. They consent that religion console us in sorrow, refine our joys, and spiritualize our hopes; but that it should conflict, at any time or in any way, with our worldly ends and prospects is to them a scandal and intolerable. It may be a servant and minister to our peace and comfort, but, however they may speak, their deeds proclaim that their living faith is in this life only, and hence they count it preposterous that its concerns and interests should in the least be sacrificed to the demands of a future existence which to them is at best but hypothetical. The spirit of secularism is in the air, and atheism is implied in much of the religious-

ness of our time. The gospel is preached in the name of man, and not in the name of God. Inasmuch as Christianity has awakened in man a deeper sense of his worth and freedom, and thereby widened the boundaries of liberty and increased human energy, it is held to be good; but inasmuch as it is God's authentic word, calling upon all men to repent, to live soberly, and justly, and piously, to walk in the narrow way and thereby enter into life everlasting, it is as a voice in the wilderness to which no answer comes but its own echo. Popular preaching, where religious themes are still thought to be in place in the pulpit, is that which expounds the temporal benefits of faith. It is self-laudation. Our liberty, our wealth, our power, our knowledge, our virtue—whatever, in a word, is ours is the best, and so we conclude that our religion, too, is excellent. And when the preacher inveighs against the evils of the times he proceeds upon the assumption that vice, in losing its coarseness, loses also its guilt. The God who searcheth the reins and the heart does not speak in these sermons, but in his place there is some moral order of the universe, some greatest happiness-principle and wisdom for a man's self. Hence they tell of the pleasures of benevolence, of the excellence of culture, of the uses of knowledge, of the purifying influence of home; or they treat of hygiene, of art and literature; while the more popular sort dress the pulpit like a stage and play the actor's part. They choose fantastic subjects, lay hold on what-

ever happens to horrify or excite the public imagination, and do not trust themselves to point a moral except in connection with some present theme of gossip. Thus does the preacher confess that faith is dead. Little occasion is there to take scandal at the utterances of outspoken infidels—of men who, in the name of science or liberty, or under whatever pretext, proclaim that God is a myth or the spirit of evil, and that this life is all in all. In the presence of these theorists we know where we stand; the ground under our feet is immovable, and the heavens above us are clear and calm. But when the voice of faith itself sounds from an empty heart, and those who profess religion have denied its meaning and power, there is cause for bewilderment. We are almost tempted not to condemn him who said there is more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds. Consider those who are called Christians. Are they distinguishable from the crowd of worldlings? Do they love money, or pleasure, or honor, or position less than the pagan multitude? Is not their public opinion to the effect that God does not bless the poor, that the possession of the goods of this life is the test of the divine favor? And what is this but materialism, and, if you will, atheism? Let us hear the words of a religious teacher here in America: "For a very large class," he says, "the Church furnishes opportunity for a pleasant social life which is in no way different from the social life of amiable, intelligent people out of the Church—that is, there is nothing

distinctively religious about it. For this class all the barriers and distinctions between the Church and the world have been removed. Church work is for them, in all its forms, a kind of sacred amusement. Public worship, with its pulpit oratory and modern church music, is an æsthetic entertainment. They have developed a religion which is not religious. They have learned how to be Christians, according to their meaning, without self-denial or any abridgment of the pleasures, pursuits, or ambitions of people who acknowledge no religious obligations. . . . They do not believe the creeds which they subscribe when they join the Church, and generally make no secret afterward of their doubt or disbelief respecting various fundamental doctrines of Christianity."* There is no religious seriousness or earnestness in these people. They are neither hot nor cold. Their religion is merely a social convenience. They do not give, or feel, or seek for religious reasons for their conduct. Their faith is not in God, but in the decencies and refinements of life. They are not anxious, they are not troubled, they do not stand in dread of God's judgment; on the contrary, their religion suggests to them only bright and cheerful thoughts. They do not believe in a God who punishes, and hence they do not believe in penance, in austerity, in self-denial. That a man should leave father and mother, and wife and children, and cleave to God only, is to them incomprehensible. The question

* *Certain Dangerous Tendencies in American Life.*

of Christ, What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his soul? is to them meaningless. They cannot conceive that any soul, if they believe in a soul, should be lost. To accept such a possibility is in their eyes the mark of a narrow and intolerant spirit. The mother who is most regular in attendance at church has no care to bring up her children in her own belief; nor is she made the least unhappy by the knowledge that they have no faith at all. If such is the state of indifference of the very great number of those who are called Christians, what shall we say of the vast body of the people who are without even the semblance of religion? They have no sense of God's presence in the world, and move about obdurate and blind, in dumb unconsciousness of His divine being. They are not the enemies of religion; they have no hatred of it; they simply know nothing of it and have no desire to know anything. It is as though religion were poetry or metaphysics, and these multitudes had no taste for such matters—were occupied with other things that concern them more nearly. They eat, they drink, they marry, they give in marriage, they buy, they sell, they plant, they build, they die and are buried; and this is the whole of human life as they view it. If there is a God, they seem to say, He is not our God, nor are we His people. To escape His presence they do not fly to the ends of the earth, but sink the soul in matter and die away from the light of His countenance.

And yet, my brethren, it is indubitable, as I

have said, that God and the soul are the first truths given in consciousness, and they remain for ever the highest factors in a truly human life. Suppose, for a moment, that there is no God and no soul. Then is there no absolute right or wrong, no divine justice, no moral responsibility, no infinite truth; then is man not what we believe him to be, but digested matter, without liberty and without honor. Then are all those high terms in which, from the beginning and everywhere, he has spoken of himself and his hopes and aspirations mere hollow cant or drivelling idiocy; then is reason itself a delusion and conscience a mockery. The fair world is swallowed up in chaos; and from the bosom of universal ruin what can we do but curse the soul's high thought of itself; curse all dreams of glory, of name and fame, all striving after wealth and pleasure; curse faith, and hope, and love, and call upon death to blot us out? If God is not, why should any man care to be? He is the life, and light, and mind, and love that gives beauty and worth to the world, and without Him whatever is is but fit to perish utterly. A deeper view shows that even when man attempts to put God and the soul aside he still supposes them to exist. They are like the laws of nature which control all the processes of our being, and of whose existence we are habitually unconscious. They lie about us and within us deep as life.

What, then, is the explanation of the mystery that man, intuitively knowing that God is, should

take interest in everything rather than in his relationship to God? Many causes work to this end. It is, in part, the result of the general law which makes it easier to sink than to rise. We lie bedded by nature in a gulf fearfully low. How short a time are even the strongest minds able to remain upon the summits of thought! How quickly even the heavenliest natures descend from the heights of contemplation to which they attain only at intervals! As the water flows downward, so do the thoughts and desires of men tend to planes that are lower than their source. Our habitual world is the world of sense; and sight, and taste, and touch do not of themselves or readily minister to moral and religious purposes. They rather entangle us in the web of time and space, and enslave us to petty aims and superficial enjoyments. They do not touch the everlasting foundations of our being and disclose to view the infinite heavens. The life of the senses is life in the present moment. It looks neither before nor after, but hurries on from sensation to sensation in an instinctive rather than in a rational way. We are drawn towards the earth by all the forces of our physical nature; our predominant affinities are with it, and we know it and love it without effort; whereas to know and love God effort is required. And this is painful, and we shrink from pain. The life of the senses is, indeed, a restless, disappointing kind of life, because God's presence haunts us; but still we look beneath us and sift the dust and sand of earth, thinking to find hidden

treasures there. We dive for pearls, and deem ourselves fortunate when we bring up some poor mollusk. Again, the world of religion is unseen, and its rewards, as generally apprehended, are future ; and for the man whose heart is in sensible delights the unseen and the future are the unreal, are as though they were not. He is so bewildered, dazzled, and fascinated by the world which he sees and touches, by the rush, and noise, and gaudy ensigns of mere earthly existence, that he seems incapable of realizing that there should be anything higher or different. We know how narrow is the circle within which each one of us walks, that we move about "in worlds not realized," and have but feeble power to enter into the thoughts of men whose way of life is different from our own. In a great city men jostle one another in the street who live in spheres of thought and feeling as widely apart as though they dwelt in separate planets. Each one sees and understands only what he bears in his heart, so that each circle is a distinct world, invisible, unknown, and unintelligible save to its own little population. Our successes and our failures, what we do and what we suffer, are as stones in the walls of the prison-house that shuts us out from companionship with our fellows ; and hence as we grow in years and in knowledge an increasing loneliness gathers round us. In virtue of a similar law the man who yields to natural attractions and suffers his life-current to flow in the channels of sense is drawn farther and farther away from God, until

at length his perception of the unseen world is blunted, and, under the shadow of earth, he sinks into stolid animal indifference to heaven, which is the soul's home.

Material things are not more certain than spiritual truths, but we grasp them more readily, and to understand them no moral preparation is necessary. All men are able to appreciate the good there is in health, power, position, and the pleasures of sense; but from the animal man the divine life is hidden, because to its perception moral conditions are as indispensable as is intellectual training to one who would find himself at home in philosophic discourse. Again, God's presence is most immediately felt in the conscience, and the highest power of religion is revealed in conduct. Religion is indeed more than morality, but where there is no morality there can be no true religion. The pure of heart see God, and He is hidden from the soul that is mired in the slough of the senses. Moral disorders disturb our intellectual view. Where the lower self predominates reason is brought into requisition to show that this is not wrong. A corrupt heart begets a sophistical mind, and a sensual temper creates repugnance to truth. Hence religious scepticism or indifference finds such ready acceptance among young men whose passions are unbridled. Their religious views tell the history of their lives. They affect a superior indifference, when in fact they are only confessing that they have not the courage to be men. What they know is little

and fragmentary, a patchwork of objections and notions picked up here and there in reviews and lectures, trivial and incoherent, a mere litter of ideas; but any argument is good enough when we wish to persuade ourselves that what is pleasant is right, or that what is difficult need not be done; so naturally do our opinions fall to the level of our lives. As a life of obedience, self-denial, and purity strengthens faith and zeal and spiritual insight, and fills us with a deeper sense of the reality of the world which we see not, so does a disorderly, self-indulgent, and sensual life rob us of spiritual discernment and of relish for heavenly things. "Whoever," says Plato, "abandons himself, whether to sensuality or to anger, can have only mortal thoughts. But he who, through love of truth, strives to think the immortal and the godlike will attain to immortality, to supreme happiness, because he cultivates in himself the divine and bears God in his soul.' The heart rather than the mind is the fountain-head of our opinions and beliefs. Free-will influences our thinking not less than our acting, and when it has been bribed by passion it corrupts the intellect. A man may be as guilty for a wrong belief as for an evil deed; and no greater absurdity has been advanced than the notion that we are not responsible for our faith or want of faith. A fault of will is at the bottom of nearly all our errors, which commonly spring from self-love, pride, vanity, sensuality, greed, indolence, or some other perverseness of our nature. And so it will be found,

if we search diligently, that men who are indifferent to religion are so, not from rational motives, but from a moral fault. They have not the will to lift themselves above the world of matter into the clear heaven of God's truth, and they therefore ignore the higher life, with the implication that their conduct is based upon reason. Whether or not religious indifference is the logical result of profound thought and scientific research is a question which is not pertinent to the case of those with whom we are now concerned; for, as a matter of fact, they neither think deeply nor investigate carefully. They have made no serious study, whether of philosophy or religion. They prefer the business and pleasures of this life to higher aims and hopes; it is a matter of taste with them, and not of conviction, and they do not seek any more than other people to ground their preferences upon arguments. Religion may be good enough, they say, but they do not feel the need of it. Let those enjoy it to whom it gives pleasure. They are content to take life as they find it and to abide the consequences. If there is a God He is good and will not deal harshly with His creatures. Now, it is plain that this habit of mind is the outgrowth of a way of living, and not of rational investigation; of absence of thought, and not of too much thinking. Men lack reason, as Fénelon says, more than religion. Were they better thinkers they would believe more devoutly. Bacon's apothegm may come in here: "It is true," he says, "that a little philosophy inclineth

men's minds to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion ; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no farther ; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and deity." Religious indifference assuredly need not spring from deep thought. There are no greater minds than St. Augustine and Bossuet, Leibnitz and Pascal, Bacon and Newton. Indeed, a noteworthy characteristic of the indifferentist is aversion to serious thought, which is not possible without effort, and is painful, and hence he takes a frivolous or commonplace view of life. But religion is, as Pascal says, so supreme a concern that it is just that those who will not take the trouble to seek it where it is obscure should be deprived of it altogether.

There is, however, I shall be told, a large number of persons who have no religious belief, and who yet devote a certain amount of time to religious questions. They are indifferent, and yet it cannot be said that they are unthinking. They examine and discuss ; they listen to arguments for and against faith ; they read much, and form and re-form their opinions, and yet are never persuaded that a man's religion is the first and essential element in his life. But this crowd, as any unprejudiced observer must admit, neither seek earnestly, nor think acutely, nor reason closely. Their religious inquiry is a kind of mental dissipation, not a process of investigation. They

are caught in a mist of views, opinions, and objections, and the farthest point they reach is to say with the Athenians to St. Paul: "We will hear you on this subject some other day." They tacitly assume that religion is at best but a side issue, and is not indispensable to a satisfactory solution of the problem of life. They have all the while an implied persuasion that they are engaged in more important affairs than God, and the soul, and life everlasting. They are hammering wood and iron and stone; they are building cities; they are making and selling clothes; they are sowing grain; they are running for office; they are doing the great world's work: and if in an idle hour they listen to some discourse on God's kingdom, it is an act of condescension which should not go without acknowledgment. With what glowing enthusiasm does not the fair believer tell the preacher that his sermon was honored to-day by the presence of some shrewd lawyer, or empiric, or politician! These great minds have stooped to the level of divine truth. The most fathomless mystery to me is that man should be the noblest work of God visible in the universe; and the only faint ray of light I catch is in believing that he is a fallen being, that original sin is a fact of observation as well as an article of faith.

It is a delusion peculiar to a rationalistic age to imagine that the intellect is the organ of faith, or that the question between religion and indifference is one in which the mental faculties alone are competent to pronounce. Faith certainly sup-

poses knowledge ; but in religion, as in science itself, what we believe is infinitely more than what we know ; and hence the attempt to make the reason the sufficient measure of faith is absurd and unnatural. It was Bacon who said that the mind, so far as possible, should be widened to the boundlessness of God's mysteries, and not the mysteries narrowed to the limits of human understanding ; and the great minds of all ages unite in condemning the shallow intellectualism which pretends to explain, catalogue, label, and stow away in the brain-cells God's infinite works. Now, the crowd of indifferentists, who, as we will suppose, give some thought to questions of religion, proceed upon the assumption that the real and the rational are identical, and hence they accept as existing only what is clear to their understanding. In other words, they propose to resolve all the positive forces of life and nature into mental abstractions ; and whatever will not fit into this imaginary and impossible world of theirs they reject on the ground that it does not commend itself to their reason. If they are to have a religion it must be without mystery and in harmony with their subjective notions of things. Heaven and earth, time and eternity, God and the soul, are to be recognized only in so far as they can be made to fit in the Procrustes bed of a dwarfed and warped intellectualism. The extravagance of such demands would repel us less if those by whom they are made possessed thoroughly trained and cultivated intellects ; but we find almost invariably

that, though they may have read a great deal, they are strangers to the best thought and culture of the world. They have skimmed over many things and are thoroughly grounded in nothing. Their minds resemble a concave mirror, which receives an image of whatever is presented, but gives to nothing its true shape and likeness; and yet they are ready to pronounce authoritatively upon the highest and profoundest questions of the soul. They dwell habitually in the midst of the noise and glare of the world, in the whirl of business and pleasure, living everywhere rather than in their own hearts, dissipating their mental power upon a multitude of petty objects, thinking neither seriously nor long upon any subject, and still they never doubt their competence to sit in judgment upon God and the divine life. The very temper in which they approach the subject of religion inevitably produces as the result of their inquiries a more hopeless state of doubt and indifference. They have no reverence; the religious sense is extinguished within them, and they have ceased to realize that there is another life or world than that of the senses. Hence it is possible for them to examine into questions of religion only in a frivolous or distracted mood. They are not in earnest; they never dream that the soul can rest in God alone; they do not desire to be convinced that this life is shadowy and unsubstantial; they cling rather, heart and soul, to the world which they see and touch, and are persuaded, even while they seem to examine, that re-

ligion is merely speculative and ideal. Hence the most superficial objections easily gain currency as arguments in favor of the wisdom of religious indifference. What would you have us do? they ask. The world is so full of conflicting opinions on the subject of religion that no certain way opens up before us. To attempt to go forward is to become entangled in a labyrinth. They alone are wise who stand aloof and take no part in the wordy wars of hypocrites and fanatics.

Now, it is plain that objections of this kind have not the logical force or bearing which the crowd of random thinkers ascribe to them. Diversity of opinion is not a justification of doubt or indifference; nor is religion the only subject on which men differ. They hold conflicting views in politics, in medicine, in philosophy, in all the departments of knowledge, and yet reasonable people do not thence draw conclusions in favor of universal scepticism and nescience. Much less should such inference be made in a matter in which the moral element predominates so strongly as in religion; for here, more than elsewhere, the intellect is under the dominion of the will, and it is inevitable that a weak and corrupt race, such as the human, should disagree concerning doctrines which impose onerous and unpleasant duties. The heart, says Pascal, has arguments of its own which the reason does not understand. This truth is alike applicable to those who lead the life of the senses and to those who make the difficult ascent along the narrow path that leads to God.

As those who walk by faith are upheld by a power stronger than any arguments which they are able to advance, so are those who are dominated by the pride of life and the concupiscence of the flesh drawn away from the light of divine truth by forces altogether more real than the intellectual reasons which they assign for their infidelity and indifference. "And this is the condemnation," says Christ the Lord, "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Like the pagans of whom St. Paul speaks, they hold God's truth captive in iniquity. As is their life, so is their belief. They understand what they love. The light, says a German writer, is made for all eyes, but not all eyes can bear the light. He who stops to reflect upon truths of this kind takes no scandal at the multiplicity of forms of faith, nor will he imagine that in matters in which men differ indifference alone is wisdom. The earnest seeker may be puzzled by the divisions among Christians, but he certainly will not infer that he is thereby justified in giving up the search after truth. This he recognizes as but one of innumerable difficulties. Faith supposes a background of darkness. God is a hidden God and dwells in inaccessible light. The claim is not put forward that religion is such a plain and simple matter that any mind may fathom its truth or comprehend its doctrines. On the contrary, it is assumed that it must ever be obscure and difficult to those by whom it is neglected. But the

immortality of the soul is something which concerns us so supremely that he who feels the weight of its influence upon the whole course of human life will only be impelled to more serious inquiry by the obscurities of faith. This, undoubtedly, is the rational view with regard to all objections and difficulties which lie in the way of those who sincerely and earnestly seek to know the truth. If the will is steadily bent toward the best the mind will be illumined from on high and man will walk secure amid the gloom and shadows of earth. If, however, we consider the subject from a practical instead of a theoretical point of view, there can be no question but the multiplicity of sects is both a cause and an effect of religious indifference. Since men in general are more greatly influenced by passion, prejudice, and self-interest than by reasons drawn from the intellect, and since the forces which drag them to the earth habitually predominate over the impulses to higher life, whatever confuses or involves the religious question is readily brought to do service as a plea for unbelief; and unbelief is found in the multitude only under the form of indifference. This precisely is the practical benefit to be derived from scepticism. It is a justification of secularism. Being in doubt as to the unseen world and the future life, the indifferentist concludes, whether explicitly or by implication, that nothing remains to do but to place his hopes and affections in natural objects; and he lays hold on the narrowness and quarrels of sectarians as upon the gospel and

sacrament of no-religion. Important, too, is the consideration that the sects occupy an untenable position. Christianity is essentially a historic religion, and they, in breaking loose from the Church, break also necessarily with Christian history. The chain of proof, which in the Church is complete and whole, is found in them only in disrupted links, and the masses, who know no other religion than this fragmentary Christianity with its broken chain of evidence, drift away into indifference. The social contact of people of different religious faiths tends to the same end, since such intercourse, to be pleasant, requires that subjects on which we disagree be kept in the background. Hence in polite society religion is not an admissible topic of conversation. It is excluded from politics. It is shut out of the school-room; and in the family, where the father and the mother have not the same faith, it is ignored. Where such a state of things exists religion cannot long maintain its hold upon the public conscience, and the inevitable result must be widespread doubt and indifference.

Another argument in favor of no-religion, of the same general import as that drawn from the multiplicity of sects, is sought for in the supposed conflict between science and faith. Viewed from an intellectual standpoint, this objection, like the one which we have just considered, is frivolous and without force. The most general and indisputable result of scientific research is a deeper insight into the fact that the universe is governed

by law. Now, what is the reign of law but the reign of mind, and therefore the reign of God? The intelligible supposes intellect; and if intelligibility is co-extensive with existence, then is the universe the work of intelligence. Another result of scientific research is a fuller knowledge of the truth that mind and matter are inconvertible terms; that by no imaginable process can we conceive that it is possible to transform sensation into thought. The logical tendency of science, therefore, is in the direction of God and the soul. As to the supposed conflict between the data of Christianity and the data of physical science, a true view of the subject reveals that the points at which such warfare is possible are few and isolated; and where it seems actually to exist it is safe to assume either that science has not said its last word on the subject, or that the real import and scope of the religious doctrines in question has not been fully apprehended. The discovery of Galileo disturbed in his day the mental composure of many believers, whereas we now know that their alarm was without foundation; and in another century men will find it difficult to realize that the true science of our time should have been thought an enemy of religion. When, however, we place ourselves at a different point of view, and look at things as they are rather than as reason shows us they should be, we recognize that the prevalence of experimental methods of investigation, and the wonderful results to which they have led, have

produced obscurity and confusion in the religious conscience of multitudes. The inductive philosophy proceeds on the assumption that experiment is the only test of reality, consequently of truth; and thus what is true of physical relations is applied without exception to whatever may become an object of thought. In this way physical science usurps the whole realm of knowledge, and proclaims that what will not come under its rule is but a dream, mere poetry and sentiment. Hence what is known as the positive method is applied not only to the study of the material world, but to the study of God and the soul. Science thus strives to bar the way that leads to the unseen, the higher world, in which the soul must live or have no life. It puts its interdict upon the search after first principles and final causes. It passes metaphysics and religion by as the ghosts of barbarous and ignorant imaginations. This procedure being as shallow as it is simple, the positivist does not stop to reflect that the material universe itself can be mentally apprehended only in terms which transform it into the unseen and metaphysical, and that consequently the inevitable conclusion from his premises is that nothing can be known and that science itself is not knowledge. None the less do these bold claims make a vivid impression upon the minds of the masses, who are pleased to find so open and plain a way to absolute religious indifference, while they are incapable of perceiving the abyss of nothing and despair in which it ends.

Nor is this the only manner in which science creates indifference to religion. By opening up to the energies of man rich and unexplored fields it has added intensity to the conflict between God and the world, between Christ and Mammon.

“The mission of Bacon and his philosophy,” says Cardinal Newman, “was the increase of physical enjoyment and social comfort; and most wonderfully, most awfully has he fulfilled his conception and his design. Almost day by day have we fresh and fresh shoots, and buds, and blossoms which are to ripen into fruit on that magical tree of Knowledge which he planted, and to which none of us, perhaps, except the very poor, but owes, if not his present life, at least his daily food, his health and general well-being.” And this mighty instrument, by which the forces of nature are transformed, tamed, bridled, and made subject to man’s will and pleasure, was put into our hands here in America while we were yet standing on the threshold of this New World, which during unnumbered ages had been as the storehouse of God to keep His most bountiful temporal blessings for us, the latest heirs of time. What more natural than that we should rush forward to take possession of the Land of Promise; or what more inevitable than that, in the heat of the struggle and the absorbing pursuit of wealth, we should, intent only upon the riches beneath our feet, lose sight of the Infinite God who made all things, and forget that man cannot live on bread alone?

And so indifference is enrooted in the land, and shoots up like some *Sequoia gigantea* as from its native soil, and overshadows and blights the garden of God. If no man can serve two masters, how shall the multitudes who toil in the temple of Mammon give their hearts to the love of higher things? Their absorbing passions are material progress and the pleasures of sense. They are the serfs of the world, and how shall they serve God? The business of life weaves round them the web of destiny. They sit at the roaring loom of Time, and the voice of the soul that whispers of eternity is drowned amid the din and noise. Religion for them is hardly possible. At best they will give their money to God, but not their hearts. 1

They will not, however, lack for arguments by which to justify themselves. They will say to me: Your censure is unwise. We are the friends of man. Our indifference makes life endurable, makes freedom possible. Religion has been the cause of inveterate and manifold evils, and if in our day it has lost some of its baneful power it is because the inertia of the multitudes of indifferents serves as a counterpoise to fanaticism. To realize the feebleness of objections of this kind it is only necessary to recall a few general principles.

Religion, in the first place, can prevail among men only in the form of a society, and hence cannot be wholly dissociated from the evils and crimes which are found in the world. In all human society, even in the Church of Christ, which is of

divine origin, the good and the wicked are commingled, and evil minds change good to their own nature. When depraved men assume the livery of heaven they remain none the less the servants of the devil. Again, wherever great interests are at stake great passions will be aroused and explosions will occur; and hence wars, persecutions, and deeds of blood, which seem to sleep in the human heart as in their home, may be provoked by mistaken zeal, as by whatever cause is capable of stirring up the lower passions of man's nature. But society is good, though inseparable from wrongs and abuses; and religion is good, though it is sometimes perverted to unworthy ends.

All civilization originates in religious faith, and the highest civilization the world has ever known is the work of Christianity. Those who have most loved the poor, the oppressed, and the unlovely and ignorant masses of men have been and are the lovers of Jesus Christ. Faith in Him has been for two thousand years well-nigh the paramount cause of righteousness, of justice, of mercy, of charity, of purity among men. It has clothed woman with sacredness, swathed infancy in divine rights, and enfolded the slave in the arms of universal brotherhood. In the presence of all this to be garrulous upon Bartholomew massacres and Galileo trials is to be only a trifler.

The subject of religious indifference is wide, complex, and involved, and I have caught but here and there a thought which may perhaps be

of some feeble help to one who should wish to make a proper study of the matter. The causes to be investigated rise even up to God and sink to the lowest germs of existence. Nature and grace, free-will and necessity, original sin and the light of reason, temperament and education, climate and social institutions, the peculiarities of the age and the actual condition of religious thought and society, together with many other forces, should be kept steadily in view, and their action and interaction carefully considered. He who would exhaust the subject should create the philosophy of human nature, fusing into a higher and more comprehensive science theology and anthropology. But in the end the conclusion will be that which comes of what I have said in this discourse.

Men are indifferent to religion, not because they have found something better, but because they have no relish for the best. They are indifferent, not because they think profoundly, or love purely, or aim highly—for God is the deepest thought, the purest love, and the highest aim of the human soul—but they are indifferent because man sinks more easily than he rises; because he is more under the control of the senses than of reason and conscience; because the veil of time and space hangs between him and God's eternity; because the love of the world requires no effort and no moral preparation, whereas religion is a weariness to the natural man, who will ever feel that “Aba-na and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, are better

than all the waters of Israel." It is to no purpose that you point out to him that religion is enrooted in the mind and the conscience; that it is the first and supreme want of the heart; that it is a law of human nature itself. You speak to him in an unknown tongue. It is in vain that you remind him of the uncertainty of life, of the delusion of hope, of the unsatisfactoriness of possession, of the fickle and fleeting nature of all earthly things. Your words are lost. This is his world, the only world he knows or loves. It was with him when his eyes first opened to the light, and it will be with him when they are closed and he is lowered into the grave. It is not much, but it is all he has or hopes to have, and to it he clings. Even in a dream it has never occurred to him to think that the essential truth is that for every man there are in the whole world but two beings, himself and God; that the rest is a vain show, a pageant, a baseless fabric—a shadowland, such stuff as dreams are made of. He will not understand that to the self-conscious soul what will be in fifty years is now. Sensation robs him of insight and forethought; and argument will not reach a disease that germinates in depths which the intellect cannot fathom.

Indifference is a more insidious and irremediable evil than infidelity, since it is easier to correct or enlighten the mind than to uplift and regenerate man's whole nature. And, finally, after all has been said, we shall have to admit that if the masses of men were honestly and deeply religious

the world would be a less attractive place to the crowd of indifferentists than it now is; just as heaven itself would not be for them, they remaining what they are, a pleasant home.

II.

RELIGIOUS FAITH AND PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

RELIGION rests upon belief in a mysterious world. Hence it is necessarily a faith, and can never be, except imperfectly, a science. It must assume what we cannot comprehend, and for the acceptance of which, consequently, we can furnish no reasons that will clear away all difficulty. What is God? What is His life? What are His judgments and His ways? No answer that is wholly satisfactory can be given. He dwells in inaccessible light, the very brightness of which covers with obscurity and darkness all the approaches that lead up to Him. His judgments are incomprehensible and His ways are unsearchable. What is man? What is his life? What is the ultimate value of his knowledge? Faith may answer: science never can. Mystery for Plato and St. Augustine; mystery for me and you; mystery for the savage and the patient seeker, who with microscope and acid searches for what eludes the utmost reach of thought. In the obscurity which envelops the highest truth lies, in the apprehension of the present age, the weakness of religion. What cannot be adequately grasped by the mind the modern prejudice declares to be unknowable; and as science is now helpful to the

common and passing wants of man in a thousand ways, popular opinion, which delights in extremes, makes of it an idol and the supreme arbiter of life and truth. To its decrees all things in heaven and earth are made subject, and it need not excite surprise that those who minister at its altar should, with haughty brow and scornful breath, deal damnation upon all who refuse to bend the knee to this new service. Among the defenders of religion even there is very generally an implied acceptance of the supremacy of science. What is the noticeable preaching of the age but an apology for religion? What is held to be so desirable as to show that it is not in contradiction with science? What other means than a reconciliation between these two powers is thought to be a remedy for the unbelief of the times? What more certain warrant for a creed is there believed to be than the fact that science supports it? And where there is conflict, real or apparent, between science and religion, are not most men ready to pronounce, without hesitation, against religion? I read in a thousand books that if God and the soul are not found at the bottom of some chemic crucible or in the abstractions of processes of mental analysis, they are not to be found at all; and on all sides I hear of the need of a religion which, based on science, shall be in harmony with culture. In this way scientific research has come to have an importance far greater than can be claimed for any physical discoveries which may thence result, or be hoped for even.

The public mind is filled with eager expectancy that at length the inner secret of nature shall be yielded up to the peering eye of some tireless investigator. Positivists and secularists hope that it shall be made plain that in matter lies the promise and the potency of all life and thought; while the religious have a vague presentiment that the soul's faith is to receive its final confirmation at the hands of the empiric. This, I apprehend, is the hidden charm which makes science popular.

The multitude are eager to learn the properties of matter, because they fancy this knowledge will throw a light never seen before upon the mystery of human life; that it will explain our hopes and fears, our loves and longings. This is the modern tree of knowledge, of which it is believed that they who eat of its fruit shall be endowed with preternatural insight and shall be as God. There is also the superstition that a fuller understanding of the laws of matter will bring on the golden age, will drive before it poverty, and crime, and disease, and the whole hydra-headed brood of primeval ignorance, until peace, and light, and wisdom shall reign throughout the world and bless all the children of men.

I will ask you, then, to consider with me whether the opinion, now so prevalent, that scientific tests are the ultimate criterion of all truth, is well founded; whether, in other words, science can be set up as a universal criterion of certitude to which religion also must conform.

This is, as I view the subject, a radical and previous question in current controversies concerning the conflict between religion and science, and one which, if properly answered, would lead to important practical results by showing that these disputes are generally idle and often harmful. Religion rests, as I have already stated, upon belief in a world which we cannot adequately grasp, and which we can imagine or describe only in vague and analogical terms. Hence religious truths are, in many instances, mysteries which, when formally expressed, seem to be inconsistent with other known truths, or even to involve a contradiction in terms. Now, here at once we come upon the deep and inexhaustible mine from which the objections of the sceptic and the infidel are drawn. In forming a mental image of God, for example, we necessarily ascribe to Him all attributes which are essential to the conception of a perfect being; and yet the critic is able to show that the notes of our idea apparently exclude one another, and that the attributes themselves seem to be in contradiction with each other and with the facts of nature. How to reconcile absolute being with personality, or infinite power and goodness with the existence of evil, are problems as old as human thought. A child can perceive the difficulty, and the meditations of philosophers have left it unexplained. The obscurity is inherent in the constitution of the mind of man, and does not, in our present condition, admit of real elucidation. And the same is true, though in a lesser way, of

questions of the soul and a future life; and when this truth is rightly appreciated such mental difficulties are seen to stand in no logical relation to scepticism. But the psychological fact remains that obscurity is hateful to the intellect, which, in proportion as it is keen and strong, will be tempted to believe that it can make itself the measure of all things.

Now, to the casual view the mystery which inheres in religious belief is absent from scientific knowledge; and this accounts for the assumption, so common in our day, that science is more certain than faith, and that any conflict between the two must necessarily prove fatal to religion. Fortunately it is only to the casual and superficial view that this is so. Mystery and obscurity envelop not only our ideas of God and the soul, but our ideas of the material universe as well. The visible world seems intelligible and plain only so long as we are content to be thoughtless and shallow. The moment we strive to get beneath the phenomenal our sight grows dim and we grope in the dark.

But to reduce science to a system we must get beyond what appears, since it is impossible to accept the crude realism which imagines that the phenomenal and the real are identical. What are called properties of matter are impressions made upon us by agencies which, we are bound to believe, exist, but of which we can form no mental image.

Form, color, size, and weight are ideas; they

are not in matter, but in our consciousness. This is not a metaphysical refinement, but a simple truth which may be said to be self-evident. When we try to get beyond these modes of consciousness, in order to determine what the essence of matter is, we at once find ourselves in a sphere where the obscurity is as great as the mystery with which the ultimate truths of religion are clothed. Matter, that it may become intelligible, must be transformed by the mind into force—into a something immaterial; and thus we perceive the full meaning of Descartes' teaching, that our knowledge of the soul is more intimate and immediate than our knowledge of corporeal substance.

The materialist affirms that matter is the alone-existing, all-embracing substance; that we have no knowledge or experience of anything else; that thought itself is but a product of moving atoms. But what is matter? It is not gold, or silver, or iron, or oxygen, or hydrogen, or carbon; for all these are but products of some primordial substance which is different from them. They are groups of atoms; and the original atom is neither gold, nor silver, nor oxygen, nor any other known thing. It is a something which we cannot perceive, of which we have no experience. The existence of the atom, pure and simple, cannot be demonstrated by experiment, neither is it possible to form a mental image of such an atom. The materialist, therefore, can accept it only as an hypothesis; and its real existence must necessarily

be as problematic for him as the existence of God or the soul.

The atom, then, is merely a logical concept, and as such we may attempt to analyze it. The atom is indivisible. But all bodies are divisible. The atom, therefore, is incorporeal. But matter is essentially corporeal. The atom, therefore, is immaterial; and so we have matter which is not matter. Again, all matter exists in space. Whatever exists in space is divisible. The atom is indivisible. It does not consequently exist in space, and therefore is not matter.

It is plain, then, that the atom, which is the substance of which the materialist speaks when he affirms that it alone exists, cannot be perceived or made known by experiment; that a mental image of it is not possible; and that the concept which we seek to form is contradictory and unthinkable.

The matter of the materialist, in point of fact, is not an object of experience, and our knowledge of it is not more certain or immediate than our knowledge of God. What we are really conscious of in the physical world is a system of forces, and our truest idea of force springs from our consciousness of will-power. The world is known to us not in terms of matter but in terms of mind; and hence all knowledge converges toward God and centres in Him, and to deny His existence is to undermine reason.

That we are all conscious of what we call the properties of matter, such as color, size, and form, is, of course, indisputable; but these are modes of

perception and not of being. An object is red or white not in itself but in relation to waves of light and to the structure of the eye; and, in a similar way, it is hard or soft, sweet or bitter, great or small. That we have an irresistible impulse to believe in an underlying reality which causes the impressions of which we are conscious is most certain; but the impulse to believe that the order and harmony of the universe are the result of intelligent contrivance is not less strong, and in the one and the other case our belief is stronger than our reasons. In science, as in faith, our ignorance is infinite, our knowledge infinitesimal.

It is not to the purpose to say that our notion of God as a contriver of the universe is anthropomorphic. Beyond doubt it is so. We are human, and we think as we feel and love, like human beings. Our ideas of matter, of force, of space, of time are symbols of modes of consciousness, and consequently are tinged with the anthropomorphism which inheres in all we think or do. We know the world as it appears to us; but that there is any essential likeness between its real nature and our mental images cannot be perceived, and, if known to us at all, must be known as an inference from principles which are not given in perception, and which cannot be verified by experiment. All men, however, in spite of this intellectual difficulty, hold as a fundamental belief that the phenomenal world is for us the truest representation of the real world. An analytical examination of the necessary postu-

lates of science, such as the uniformity of nature, the persistence of force, the indestructibility of matter, and the law of causation, would serve to show still more clearly the very serious and even insuperable intellectual difficulties by which it is surrounded when viewed as a system of thought ; but in attempting, in a single discourse, to embrace so wide a field I can do little more than suggest. Enough has been said to direct attention to the fact that ultimate scientific ideas are involved in the same obscurity in which ultimate religious ideas are shrouded. If this truth is not generally recognized the cause is to be found either in the superficial view which men take of science or in the passions which religious controversy is apt to arouse. The remark has been made that if mathematical truths involved duties or conflicted with temporal interests the critical acumen of sceptics would discover reasons for doubting them. In the effort to reduce science to a system of philosophy which shall give an explanation of the origin and nature of the material universe, our thought is fatally carried beyond the realm of science and passes under the control of the pure reason. The materialist must necessarily, at the outset, assume the existence of that which it is his purpose to show need not or cannot exist. In attempting to prove that mind is only a function of matter, and therefore not a real thing, he, in spite of himself, starts with mind and gets at his notion of matter only by its light and aid. He proposes to get at mind as the ultimate

product of matter, and the whole process inevitably involves the assumption that mind is prior to matter, since it is only in passing through the alembic of the mind that matter becomes intelligible or a subject of thought. In order to be able to reach mind as a final result we should be able to eliminate it from the problem, which is manifestly impossible. Hence materialism cannot formulate a disproof or denial of metaphysics, except in undergoing a metamorphosis which makes it metaphysical. Let us take, for example, the materialistic dogma of the eternity of matter. This doctrine cannot possibly be proven by experiment. The bare thought of a series of experiments by which it should be shown that the material world had a beginning or that it had no beginning is absurd. The problem of the origin of the world cannot be solved by the empiric method; and hence it is evident that science cannot set up a valid denial of the supernatural, since it cannot prove that the universe may not have had a beginning, and, if so, that beginning, from the nature of things, was supernatural.

Let us now proceed to the consideration of certain practical results which flow from the principles here stated.

If our inability to form a satisfactory theory of the universe has no tendency to make us doubt its existence, neither should the mental difficulties which inhere in our ideas of God and the soul make us sceptical of their existence. The reality of the physical world is for us as much a matter

of belief as the reality of God's being, and in both cases we are forced to recognize that there are causes of belief which are not reasons, and which are stronger than any assignable intellectual arguments. The idealist doubts the reality of the material world, as the materialist doubts that of the ideal world; and though partisans on either side may affirm that it is impossible that there should be a sincere idealist or a sincere materialist, the critic perceives that those who set out with the assumption that intellectual reasons are the only sufficient grounds of belief altogether ignore the fundamental conditions of the problem to be solved. Those who are not familiar with such speculations will be tempted to think that the appeal to the common sense and consent of mankind will be sufficient to give the victory to the materialist. I see and touch a stone or a book, and my belief in its existence is fatal, so that there seems to be no parallel between belief in the reality of material and spiritual essences. But philosophers agree that the attempt to solve this question by an appeal to uncritical opinion is absurd. We know that color, size, and form are subjective impressions, not objective entities. Our natural convictions have their own value, but they do not afford a sufficient basis for a true theory of knowledge. Another deduction from the principles which I have sought to establish is that science is not more certain or more intelligible than religion, and hence cannot be set up as a standard to which religion must conform; and

therefore their mutual antagonisms need not alarm us. Why should we be so anxious to bring religious dogmas into perfect accord with the deductions of science, since we confess that these dogmas are often mysteries which we can neither adequately express nor satisfactorily harmonize? We hold that God is infinitely powerful and good, and that evil exists. Plausible theories by which these apparently conflicting beliefs are reconciled may readily be put forward, but none of them really solve the difficulty; and yet the profoundest thinkers and the noblest minds have accepted these beliefs as the nearest possible approach to the truth; and, indeed, it requires not much thought to understand that the rejection of them leads to absurdity. If we do not profess to be able to show clearly that religious belief is always consistent with itself, why should we be disturbed because we are unable to show that it is consistent with the dogmas or deductions of science, which not only rest upon unproved assumptions, but which deal with a world equally as mysterious as that of faith?

The prevalence of unbelief in our day is commonly supposed to be the result of the progress of science; and I am not going to deny that the scientific habit of mind is unfavorable to the growth of faith and reverence, but I have no hesitation in affirming that the great mass of unbelievers are as little conversant with real science as with true religion. Their science is a jumbled heap of odds and ends, and their first principles are certain cant

phrases which they hold mechanically and not in any vital relation with the world of thought. The conflict between faith and physical science, of which so much is written, is for the most part imaginary. Theology and physics deal with different orders of knowledge, belong to different worlds, and follow different intellectual methods. The scientist studies phenomena and their laws. The moment he abandons secondary causes to occupy himself with first and final causes he is false to his method and must become involved in an inextricable labyrinth ; but so long as he is content to confine himself to matter and sequences of material phenomena there is little danger of unfriendly encounter between himself and the theologian who understands his business. Facts, according to the proverb, are stubborn things, and a wise man will not run his head against them. The theist and the atheist do not disagree about the facts of science, but they disagree in the interpretation which they give to them, in the inferences which they draw from them ; and the physicist, in order to reach conclusions adverse to religion, is compelled to overstep the limits of his science. It is an axiom, for instance, among natural philosophers that matter is indestructible. The meaning of this is that, so far as experiment and inductive reasoning can go, we are unable to get at evidence that matter ever is annihilated. To argue from this that it is eternal and uncreated is to abandon the scientific method. The fact is accepted by the theist and the atheist ; the conflict

arises only when the atheist abandons science for metaphysical speculation. The intimate relation, to take another example, which exists between the power to think and the brain is a fact admitted by all men, and this has been in recent times, especially in Germany, a chosen field for scientific research. The facts are interesting alike to the believer and the unbeliever, and with regard to them there is no conflict of opinion. But here the temptation to theorize is exceptionally strong, and the materialist infers that thought is merely a secretion of the brain, as bile is of the liver. But in drawing this conclusion he has not only violated the scientific method; he has sought to overleap an impassable chasm. The most delicate tests cannot give him anything more than definite movements of definite central atoms, and between these and consciousness no terms of comparison are even conceivable. No one, I suppose, holds that, in the actual state of knowledge, it is possible to explain consciousness by its material conditions; and when we come to understand the problem we perceive that such explanation is, from the very nature of things, impossible. Hence again, then, it is not science but unscientific theories which conflict with religious doctrines.

The question of spontaneous generation, to take still another example, has in recent times been the subject of unwearying research and of endless debate. The theory of those who maintain that inorganic matter is capable of giving rise to living organisms is, to say the least, still unproven.

It is merely hypothetical. The actual scientific teaching is that only the living produces life. But let us suppose that spontaneous generation shall some day be shown to exist in nature. Will there thence arise a conflict between faith and science? To think so is to misunderstand the principles already established. We should still hold that life is from God, but that its manifestation is through the action of natural laws, which is even now accepted as true. This doctrine of derivative creation has been familiar to theologians for centuries. It is a theory advanced by St. Augustine and approved of by St. Thomas. Though nature is unintelligible without God, yet we do not expect to find the supernatural in the sphere of mere nature. And this same reasoning applies to the current scientific theories of evolution. The argument from design which has always been held to be of weight in natural theology is now thought to have been shown to be worthless by the Darwinian school, which explains the universe by the philosophy of chance. Nature gropes blindly, and fails a million times where she succeeds once; and the achievement of a higher development seems to be the fortuitous result of accidental circumstances; so that what appears to us to have been fashioned for a purpose is only the outcome of some sort of natural selection. But it is not difficult to understand that the argument from design is not overthrown by the current theories of evolution. The fact that there is a plan, a method, and a progress in nature not only remains, but is

enforced by new arguments; and this is all that the theologian need ask. He does not require a world physically perfect any more than he requires that it should be morally perfect. It is enough that there is an order and a law which make it intelligible, and consequently intentional. This attempt to deny the existence of a purpose in the workings of nature is another example of the abandonment of the scientific method. The Darwinian hypothesis is concerned with the order of natural phenomena, not with their cause; it seeks to explain the mode, not the purpose, of their appearance. If the outcome is harmony, beauty, strength, intelligence, to point to the slow and obscure processes by which such results have been brought about is to wander from the question at issue and to seek to compel science to do a work for which it is not fitted. Though this separateness of the spheres of physical science and religious faith is a general truth, we are nevertheless compelled to admit that there are points where they may impinge upon one another while each remains in its own orbit. And a case in point confronts us the moment we turn our thoughts to revelation, which is not conceivable except as an interference of the supernatural with the natural. A miracle is required to witness to the fact of revelation; and a miracle, it is said, is a denial of the scientific belief in the uniformity of nature. The uniformity of nature is equivalent to the law of universal causation, which again, as Mr. Balfour has recently pointed out in a work of great

analytical power, is equivalent to a belief that similar antecedents are always followed by similar consequents. It amounts to the fixity of relation between cause and effect. Now, the introduction of a supernatural cause does not conflict with this law of nature, but merely places the event outside of it—relatively to our thinking, at least—for a miracle may form part of the unity and uniformity of the universe, as seen from a higher point of view. It can, of course, be no part of my present purpose to prove the reasonableness of belief in miracles any more than to prove the reasonableness of belief in the uniformity of nature, since I desire merely to show that the two beliefs do not conflict.

Since the evidence of revelation is received through miracle, it follows that supernatural religion is necessarily historic; and on this ground conflict between faith and science is at least possible. But the points at which this may occur are not numerous. "Holy Scripture," says Cardinal Newman, "does declare a few momentous facts—so few that they may be counted—of a physical character. It speaks of a process of formation out of chaos, which occupied six days; it speaks of the firmament; of the sun and moon being created for the sake of the earth; of the earth being immovable; of a great deluge, and of several other similar facts and events. It is true. Nor is there any reason why we should anticipate any difficulty in accepting these statements as they stand, whenever their meaning and drift are au-

thoritatively determined; for it must be recollected their meaning has not yet engaged the formal attention of the Church, or received any interpretation which as Catholics we are bound to accept, and in the absence of such definite interpretation there is, perhaps, some presumption in saying that it means this and does not mean that." Holy Scripture does not contain a revelation of the physical sciences. Its purpose is to make known not the world of sense, but the world of spirit; and when it speaks of material phenomena it employs the language of the people, which is perverted when we attempt to fasten upon it the character of technical terminology. We habitually use expressions which we know to be technically false, but which describe natural phenomena better than a more exact phraseology. The position of Catholics towards the Holy Scripture does not require them to give to its descriptions of natural processes a scientific meaning so long as the Church has pronounced no definitive judgment in the matter. How much higher and safer ground this is than that occupied by Protestant apologists I need not point out.

When the Copernican theory was first advocated as a demonstrable hypothesis it created widespread uneasiness among the religious minds of Europe. Men had always believed that the earth was stationary and that the sun turned round it, and this belief was associated with the teachings of revelation by which it was supposed to be confirmed. A closer view of the subject, however,

revealed the fact that the Church had authoritatively decided nothing on this point. Other results of scientific research have at first startled believers in the truth of Christianity, but the event has not failed to show that the alarm was groundless. The timidity with which the progress of empirical investigation seems to inspire many Christians supposes either a weak faith or a confused knowledge of the limitations of scientific thought. And I cannot forbear to advert here, though nothing is farther from my intention than controversy, to the unreasonable demands which are made upon Protestants. Their theory of Christianity compels them to have recourse to the process of induction in order to get a knowledge of the doctrines of revelation. They must compare, weigh, and contrast texts of Scripture or citations from the Fathers, with the hope of thereby arriving at a specific dogma, as the scientist finds a law of nature by a careful study and analysis of its phenomena. But the experience of three centuries has shown that induction, which produces such happy results in physical research, produces only sectarianism and confusion of tongues when applied to the study of revelation. Inductive reasoning requires special training and special gifts, and hence true men of science are rare; but the Protestant theory rests on the assumption that every man is capable of carrying on this sort of an argument in a matter more difficult and obscure than natural science. The victory of the unbeliever cannot be doubtful when

Christians take up a position which is manifestly untenable. An illustration in point was given at a meeting of the Sunday-School Association, held in a town of central Illinois a few days ago. The subject for consideration was the Bible. One speaker argued that it is inspired, because it inspires others; and then proved that it is God's word, because it satisfies. Another maintained that it is divine, because, as there is but one God, so there is but one Bible; and a third held that in this enlightened day there is no need of argument at all, since "the rocky Gibraltar" is its own defence. This sort of reasoning, I need hardly say, has far more power to make sceptics than the writings and lectures of infidels. When every believer has his own dogmas of revelation inductively reached by the examination of the Holy Scripture, it is not surprising that there should be on all sides a conflict between religion and science. A comprehensive view of the subject would show that the idea of a revelation involves that of an authoritative depository of the doctrines revealed; and where this is denied or not recognized hopeless confusion must inevitably result.

I will, in conclusion, briefly restate the general principles a knowledge of which is indispensable to all who hope to be able to form a critical estimate of the significance and value of the current controversies concerning the mutual relations of religion and physical science. The real and essential nature of the material world is not more intelligible than that of the spiritual world. Neither

are we more certain of its existence than of the existence of God and the soul. A true analysis of the data of human consciousness shows that it is contrary to reason to deny either the being of God or the reality of the external world. All physical science rests upon assumptions which cannot be scientifically proven, and hence, if we accept its own method as the sole sufficient test of truth, we are forced to maintain that its conclusions are only hypothetical. The inability of the human mind to adequately grasp ultimate truths is evidence that faith is an essential element of man's knowledge, and consequently that there is no logical connection between intellectual difficulty and doubt, and this principle applies to the conclusions of science with not less force than to the teachings of religion. With these ultimate truths science, however, is not properly concerned. It assumes them in so far only as it is unable to get along without them. Its proper province is the world of phenomena, and hence its conflict with religion, if it exist at all, is accidental. The interference of the supernatural with the natural, as maintained by historic Christianity, does not contradict any law of science. Where authoritative teachings of the Church involve declarations concerning physical phenomena, such declarations, as a rule, have no reference to what properly falls within the competence of science. The dogmas of the divinity of Christ and the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist leave untouched all the properties of matter with which the empiric can deal.

The confusion which at present prevails in the realm of religious thought is traceable to the fact that those who accept revelation either deny or fail to recognize that it involves the idea of an authoritative depository of the doctrines revealed. Without such depository the dogmas of supernatural religion can neither be certainly known nor reduced to a logical system. Hence Protestantism, though it has always laid great stress upon reason and has claimed for itself, with special emphasis, the epithet rational, is able to present to the world only a fragmentary and contradictory statement of the truths of revelation; whereas the Catholic system is consistent with itself and so firmly knit that it cannot be successfully assailed, except by impugning the whole supernatural order, and consequently God Himself. The Church is immovably founded upon God and the soul; each stone is in its place, and the whole structure rises heavenward in perfect symmetry and without flaw. If any one imagines that God and the soul are to melt away like a dream at the touch of science, then he may persuade himself that it will undermine the Church; but then he must believe that hope and love and all high thought will perish amid the ruins; that

“Earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.”

Ours is a higher faith, and we tread firmly, though we see “darkly as through a glass.”

III.

GOD AND CHRIST.

“Now this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”—ST. JOHN xvii. 3.

HUMAN life flows in a narrow channel, and whether we think, or love, or strive to impress our dreams upon the outward world, we are all, in the end, taught the one and the same lesson: that what we have found is not what we have sought.

This truth is proclaimed by the preacher and the poet, by the saint and the sinner, by the philosopher and the man of the world. It is the universal epitaph to be filled in for every child of woman between the dates of birth and death. We look up to a few minds who seem to dwell on sunlit summits of intelligence and to peer into the inner heart of existence; but they differ from us only in their more perfect consciousness of the limitations of human knowledge. The mystic veil with which nature is clothed is not lifted for them any more than for ourselves.

And so there are happy natures—happy in themselves and happy in the overflowing love of friends—and yet they too, sooner or later, pro-

claim the great truth and confess the unsatisfactoriness, the illusiveness of human life. In what an eager age we live! What wonderful transformations are taking place under our eyes! When was there ever a time in which opportunity offered so vast, so inexhaustible a field to man's labor?

The material progress of this century overbalances that of a thousand years. Distant places have been brought nigh; continents have been peopled; great nations have grown up as in a day; and amid these rapid changes old fetters have fallen or have been broken, and on all sides there is larger liberty. The human heart beats faster; the pulse of life is quicker; and countless multitudes are rushing onward to take possession of the earth.

But the meaning of this vast and irresistible movement is no longer a mystery to us, and it therefore no longer binds us with the spell which it threw over the minds and hearts of men in its earlier developments. We see plainly now that it has no answer to give to the immortal questionings of the soul. When this progress has wrought itself out into all the forms of which matter is susceptible, life will not be richer or more joyous or satisfactory. Railroads and telegraphs, schools and newspapers, great cities, and the ocean white with sails bearing the products of all climes to every people, may fill us with complacent thoughts, but they bring no glad tidings of everlasting life, they promise no redemption from death. If man

himself is without import or value, how shall we take delight in these his contrivances?

† Why is it, my brethren, that in the presence of the highest science, of the deepest love, and of the marvellous achievements of human labor we are filled with sadness and disappointment rather than peace and joy? What we most desire is to know and to love, and to impress our thoughts and loves upon the outward world; and yet, given the farthest reach of knowledge, the purest fountain of love, and the completest dominion over matter, the soul is still restless, and wanders, like the dove, through a boundless universe, homeless, unless it finds the ark of God.

Here we have touched the everlasting foundations upon which religious faith rests. It springs from an inward necessity, from the radical contradictions of human existence; and so long as man remains man, so long will faith in God, in the soul, and in the divine life remain the truest and the profoundest expression of his inward needs and his highest aspirations.

† The gay, the thoughtless, the busy world will not understand this solemn truth; but God's tribunal abides for ever, and in turn every human being is brought to the witness-stand, and there, as each delivers his last utterance, we all agree: vanity of vanities, a walking shadow, an unsubstantial dream, a fitful fever, a tale told by an idiot, death's fool—this is man's life. And this view is the final, the ultimately true view of life as presented on the world's stage. It is not the

morbid product of special epochs of culture and refinement, or of times of public calamity and widespread ruin. It is not the outgrowth of the Christian theory of the universe. The misery and illusiveness of life is lamented by Homer and Sophocles, as by Dante and Shakspere. It is confessed by emperors and great conquerors with deeper conviction than by beggars and common criminals. We are the children of sorrow, and sad thoughts are sweet thoughts. Our sufferings abide; our joys quickly fly away.

The child is happier than the man, because the dream of life is better than the real thing.

“What good is given to men
More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven ?
What joy more lasting than the vernal flower ?
None. 'Tis the general plaint of human kind,
In solitude, and mutually addressed
From each to all, for wisdom's sake. This truth
The priest announces from his holy seat,
And, crowned with garlands in the summer grove,
The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.”

How shall we explain this wail which rises from the bosom of all peoples in every age?

Why, since we love life, are we not content with life?

Why, since we desire to know, are we not satisfied with knowledge?

Why, since we feel that the end of life is action, do our deeds seem pitiful the moment they are done?

These contradictions of our nature are so far-

reaching and so absolute that he who once fully recognizes them, and yet refuses to look to a higher world for the explanation of the mystery, is fatally driven to adopt a philosophy of despair. He must hold with Sophocles that the highest good is not to be born, and that, after birth, nothing is so desirable as death. All theories which ignore God and the soul's immortality logically lead to pessimism; and since hope is deep and imperishable as life, very despair would impel man to cleave to God and to faith in his own spiritual destiny. Thus again is religion grounded in our inmost nature, and is as indestructible as God and the soul, as necessary as truth or law.

Individuals may be irreligious, as they may be irrational or inhuman, but religion is as necessarily a part of the nature of man as is reason or affection. Every rational theory of the universe, of knowledge, of duty, of law, of causation implies the existence of God; and the disenchantment which in every sphere of life follows attainment is the soul's confession of God's presence. God's existence is a part of human consciousness, and mental difficulties can no more make us doubt His being than they have power to make us distrust the perceptions of the senses. Religion, then, is the supreme law of life. It gives direction to thought, sanction to morality, stability to government, and peace to the soul. Man's relation to God determines his relation to his fellows and to the world. He is distinguished from the visible universe not less by thought and love than by

religious faith. Religion is the measure of the value of life. Without it nature is only a machine and existence but dust and ashes. It is the germ of civilization, the bulwark of liberty, the nurse of heroism, the decisive element in character, and the finer spirit of all knowledge.

The life of man is threefold: animal, rational, divine. It is in the body, in the mind, in the soul. And to this triple life corresponds a triple light: the light of the eye, the light of reason, and the light of faith. Life is sustained through communion with its proper object. The body is fed with matter, the mind with truth, the soul with God. Our knowledge of matter is on the surface, is sensible; our knowledge of truth is fragmentary and symbolic; our knowledge of God is mysterious and dark; and hence there is an element of faith in all science, in all philosophy. The more knowledge grows the more does it compel us to believe; and we recede from truth in proportion as we seek to exclude belief from our intellectual formulas. We talk rather with a lisping child than with a man who fancies he has fathomed the heart of existence and is able to unfold, in set terms, the mystery of nature. The universal distrust of philosophic theories and systems grows out of our consciousness of the existence of an order of truth higher and deeper than that which is revealed to us by the light of reason.

“Through love, through hope, and faith’s transcendent dower
We feel that we are greater than we know.”

Faith is the complement of reason, the necessary postulate of the highest reaches of thought to which it is possible for man to attain. The universe is not less wonderful to the profoundest thinker than to a ploughboy; and wonder is the mind's confession of the need of faith. If faith is an element of all our knowledge, it is the source and fountain-head of conduct. The face of the worker is turned to the future. He trusts, he hopes, he believes. The uniformity of nature, if we take the matter rigidly, is not known to us; we believe in it; and without this invincible faith the springs of action would break. Credit is the master-principle of commercial life, which, it appears, is the heart of the modern world; and what is credit but trust, confidence, faith? Why does a true man feel that to confide in his honor is to make appeal to that which is most intimate and godlike in his nature? Is it not because we instinctively recognize that faith rather than knowledge is the highest instrument of communion of man with man, as of man with God?

To analyze the motives of conduct does not tend to increase the power of right doing. The obedient child does not argue about parental authority, the patriot does not ask why it is good to love one's country, the martyr has no desire to examine into the grounds of his faith. However we may explain it, a rationalistic temper is a sceptical temper, and a sceptical temper undermines character. Simple assent, not reflex certitude, is the motive cause of great achievements. He who

would do great things must greatly hope, and faith is the food of hope.

The creative epochs are invariably epochs in which men believe. Faith watches by the cradle of nations, and criticism argues and doubts over their graves.

“The farthest reach of reason,” says Pascal, “is to recognize that there are an infinity of things above it. It must be weak indeed if it does not see thus far.” If we know anything we know there are many things which we do not and cannot know. Into this boundless, undiscovered world we reach out by faith; and if we but understand what reason is we can have little difficulty in perceiving that there can be no real conflict between faith and science. Science observes, compares, and catalogues the phenomena which meet the senses, with a view to resolve their complexity into simple elements and principles. When it has reached the primal elements and laws of nature its work is done. Now, on this subject there is no disagreement amongst men. We all accept facts; we all recognize natural laws that have been clearly shown to exist.

The conflict is not between science and faith, but between belief and belief. The religious controversy of the age grows out of the attempts to make science serve as the basis for a creed. Cardinal Newman and Mr. Herbert Spencer do not disagree concerning the first elements of matter or the laws of nature; they separate only when they leave the world of science for the realms of belief.

The various anti-Christian theories of the universe, such as pantheism, materialism, or secularism, are creeds, not science, and the assumptions upon which they rest involve intellectual difficulties as great, to speak with forbearance, as any contained in the Christian mysteries. The materialist does not know there is no God. At most he can but believe there is none. Whatever theory of the universe we may adopt, it is through faith that we reach our judgment as to what is the transcendent reality which lies behind phenomena. The question is not whether we shall believe, but what we shall believe. Shall we through faith rise or sink? Shall we believe that the power manifested to us in thought, in love, in conscience, is God or a blind force? Shall we trust the larger hope or yield to despair? Shall we believe in the freedom of the will, in human responsibility, or in fate? Shall we hold man to be divine or merely animal? What we are most certain of is that we live, that we think and love. This we know more immediately than that there is a material world around us. If faith springs from knowledge and follows the lines of thought, surely then that faith is most rational which solves the mystery of the universe by believing in a Being who lives, and thinks, and loves. So long as the human heart feels that life, and thought, and love are the best, so long will mankind believe that these powers are in some way, however inexplicably, in God; and hence the Christian view of the universe, which sees in it the work of God, one, infinite,

eternal, personal, the creator and ruler of all things, able and willing to watch over His creatures, must and will be accepted as the final true view.

This is the highest faith, and it issues forth from the divinest thought, the largest hope, the most intimate and imperishable aspirations of the soul. It satisfies both the mind and the heart. It clothes the world with gladness, and gives an aim and an end to life. It is the food of hope ; it is the fountain of love. It rises like the sun over the dawn of human history, and sheds its holy light over us, the latest birth of time. It is as the solid earth on which we stand to all who love truth, and justice, and liberty ; to all who suffer and are wronged and down-trodden. It is the soul's refuge from despair and death. Gather up all the powers of thy being ; send forth thy thought into boundless space, as high as heaven, as low as the abyss ; recount the eternal years, follow up the coming time until it falls into the bosom of eternity ; enter into thy own heart, turn thy mind back upon itself ; make appeal to those who know, question the great thinkers of the world, make them thy companions by day and night ; deem no labor hard, no time long ; give thy life to patient research, and, when all is done, return like a tired child and confess that there is no joy, no peace, no rest save in God, whom thy mother taught thee to adore and love. Without Him the universe is but a charnel-house. "Having no hope," said St. Paul, "and without God in the world."

The more I seek to catch the real thought that underlies all the atheistic creeds of this age, the more I see that it is one of despair. The advocates of these various superstitions, pantheistic, materialistic, or by whatever epithet they may be denoted, have lost God and are without hope. They are agnostics and have no faith; they are atheists and have no hope; they are pessimists and have no love; their feet stand in the ways of death, and to follow after them is to love darkness rather than light.

“Now this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”

The open way that leads to God is that wherein Christ did walk.

The attributes of God, as revealed to us by nature, are infinite *power* and *knowledge*; and as made known by the intimations of conscience they are *judgment* and *justice*. The God of nature and of the human conscience is an angry God. His first word to the soul of man is a rebuke, and, like Adam, we seek to flee from His voice. The sense of sin and guilt is the universal foundation of all the historic religions. Hence, though the soul hungers for God and yearns for Him like a child for its lost mother, He is hidden and seems deaf to the despairing cry of the work of His hands. The dark mystery of evil hangs over the face of the universe and blurs the divine image. God and nature are at strife. It is impossible either to deny or to explain sin. It falls like a blight upon

the whole race of man; it is the one discordant note in the harmony of existence. It is not in matter but in ourselves, and once to feel its malign power is to be conscious of immortal life; for the soul that has sinned has stood face to face with the absolute, the unchangeable, the eternal. Much argument has been used to show that the idea of hell, of never-ending evil, is contrary to the divine attributes, as if the real mystery were not that evil should have a beginning, not that it should never have an end. But an artificial world loves shams, the most unholy of which is sentimentalism, whose soul is insincerity.

Sin is; it is an abyss; it is the gulf that yawns between God and man. Hence the weakness and impotence of all religion that fails to recognize this original taint of our nature and the consequent need of redemption.

It is here that we detect the radical defect of all creeds that are founded upon philosophies, the mockery of a religion of culture. Such religion begins and ends with externals. It aims at decency and ornament. It shuns not sin but grossness. It cultivates the arts and graces of life. It assumes the virtue it has not. It is decorous and wears the garb of reverence. It worships fashion, beauty, fame, and wealth. The good are those who live in good society. The poor and uncouth are criminal. This religion is an unscruplarity; it is of the devil; and wherever it flourishes the soul of man is stifled and his heart is palsied.

There is no genuine human religion where there is no deep sense of sin. It is not enough that we know God ; we must know also our own wretchedness, our unworthiness, our need of a mediator through whom we may draw nigh to God.

“The knowledge of God,” says Pascal, “without that of our own misery leads to pride. The knowledge of our misery without the knowledge of Jesus Christ produces despair. But the knowledge of Jesus Christ frees us from both pride and despair, because there we find at once God, our own sinfulness, and its remedy. . . . We should, therefore, strive to know Jesus Christ, since through Him alone can we hope to know God rightly. He is the true God of men—that is, of sufferers and sinners. He is the centre of everything and the end of everything ; and he who does not know Him knows nothing either of the world or of himself.”

God is the soul’s most absolute and infinite need, and Jesus Christ is God brought near to man, to walk with him, to speak with him, to lift him up above himself, to redeem him from sin and death, and to clothe him as with a garb of celestial light in faith, and hope, and love.

“Get thee up upon a high mountain,” cries Isaias, “thou that bringest good tidings to Sion ; lift up thy voice with strength, thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem ; lift it up, fear not. Say to the cities of Juda : Behold your God. Behold the Lord God shall come with strength, and His arm shall rule ; behold His reward is with Him and His work is before Him. He shall feed His

flocks like a shepherd ; He shall gather together the lambs with His arm, and shall take them up in His bosom, and He himself shall carry them that are not able to walk."

The heavens have opened and God has stooped to us ; and we know now that He is love. Christ the Saviour stands forth from amidst the whole race of men in no uncertain light.

He is the perfect man—so perfect that whoever draws near to Him adores, seeing that He is also God. "Hominem vidit," says St. Augustine of doubting Thomas, "Deum confessus est." Hence those who have once known the Lord Jesus never fear for the fate of His religion, being certain that it is immortal, a part of God's eternal nature—the religion, not of one people or one age, but of man and all times ; the fulfilment of the past and the promise of the future ; the worship of God in spirit and in truth, founded in purity of heart and the brotherhood of mankind. It is God's absolute religion, without country, without idol, springing from hearts warmed by the heavenly influence and made capable of faith, hope, and love. It is the plain revelation of man's godlike nature, the palpable manifestation of God's infinite goodness and mercy. It is the light of the world, the nurse of morality, the magnetic power which gives to the whole race of man an upward and heavenly tendency, making the nations curable and inspiring confidence in the midst of a degeneracy that awakens thoughts of despair. It is the soul's refuge, the asylum of that freedom whose mother is truth,

the rest of the weary and heavy-laden, the anchor of the storm-tossed, the sure citadel of those who love heavenly chastity and for its dear sake wage battle with the world and the flesh. It is the balm of the bruised heart, the solace of those that weep and are comfortless, the promise of pardon to the sinful and fallen, the only power that on the grave can build a monument of hope, and out of death bring forth life eternal. And what is all this but Christ the Lord spread through the world and communicated to men?

Christianity is only the life and grace of Christ, the history of His person and His work. From Him as a centre its spiritual and moral energy emanates ; and upon Him, as upon a rock set in place by the hand of God from the foundation of the world, the heavenly temple rests. He is the Highest, God of God, and Light of Light. Through Him are all things. He is the Prince of Peace, the Father of the future age, the Desired of the nations, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ; in Him are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God ; beneath His feet are placed all things. He is the world's great King, the Supreme Leader of men, the Head to whom every knee in heaven and on earth must bow. And yet He is the lowliest, the Virgin's Son, a carpenter, humble of heart and meek, poor and a lover of the poor, full of sympathy and of the purest love, but so intense that after two thousand years it still burns in a cold and heartless world.

Serviceable is He to all, the friend of men, whose life is measured by good deeds done to soothe the cares and lift the thoughts of those who suffer, who are downcast, who are overburdened.

How calmly and sweetly He walks through the world! Peace and light attend Him. The blind draw near and see; the sore-vexed hear His word and are quiet as sleeping childhood. Around Him there breathes the odor of green fields. The meanest flower is beautiful in His eyes, and He pities even the sparrow that falls. Innocent children come to Him, and He cleanses the leprous. He has a divine simplicity that brings Him near to the people; but in the crowd He is placid, calm, and serene, like the blue vault of heaven that bends over him. In the storm He sleeps, and when His enemies seek to ensnare Him He passes on as though unconscious. The sublimest truths fall from His lips without effort, and in words so simple and so clear that they have sunk into the public conscience of the world, and are henceforth for ever ineradicable; and He acts as He speaks, with power, commanding the winds and the waves, healing the sick and raising the dead to life, pardoning the sinner, and revealing the hidden thoughts of the heart.

And in all things He is sinless, God's spotless Lamb. His purity is so absolute that in all ages those who have drawn nearest to Him have instinctively chosen the virginal life; and yet His love is so intense that in every generation millions

have given up freedom and home to become the least of His servants.

Those who behold His divine face, that is luminous as the sun, and the vesture of His humanity, that is whiter than snow, cry out with St. Peter: It is good for us to be here; and fain would they abide for ever in the shadow of this vision. To be with Him is enough—is more than wealth, and friends, and fame. “Rest in my love”—this is His word. And as, when the sun sinks towards its setting amidst golden clouds, the birds of heaven wing their silent way through the hushed and rosy sky to sweet repose beneath the sheltering bough, so in all lands for many hundred years poor human souls, tired of the hollow, sin-distracted world, have seen that meek face, have heard that gentle bidding, and, following after Him, have rested in His love.

Love is the best; but not the love of man and woman, that the race may abide; nor the love of parent and child, which is part of the same providence; nor the love of friend for friend, which is mutable and akin to death; but the love of the best, which is the love of God: and the Lord Jesus bears God’s love to men.

By nature we are bedded in self-love; we prefer ourselves to all things else—to law, to justice, to truth, to God. Each one makes himself the centre of the world; and from this egoism springs universal disorder. Virtue belongs not to the soul that rests within itself, but to the soul that

rises above itself and reaches out after that which is infinite, eternal, and absolute.

Things are good and beautiful, not in their relation to us, but as they are known to God. We are parts of the whole—words which God speaks, meaningless when separate and disunited, but symbols of heavenly truth when woven into the divine discourse. And we will not keep our places, but each constitutes himself an isolated vocable, which is his key to unlock the meaning and worth of the universe ; and so a candle grows larger than a star, and the present moment outweighs eternity. God's world is transformed into my world. Pride perverts the intellect ; sensuality corrupts the heart ; and self-love separates man from man and men from God. God is the light of the mind ; and we think the mind itself is luminous. God alone can be the soul's lover ; and we prostitute the heart to matter, which can but touch the coarser fibres of our lowest nature. Charity is God's essential law ; and we can find no better reason for loving our fellow-men than that to love them is the easiest way to keep them from doing us harm.

We are at strife with God and with ourselves. We are restless, feverish. We stretch forth the hand to pluck the fruit, and find it worm-eaten at the core ; we seize on trickling honeycombs and find them dry. We gain our ends only to discover that we have missed the kernel of our hopes. We are weak, we are wretched ; we hunger and thirst for sensation. We rush from desire to enjoyment,

and, like greedy children, cry for more and more, until in the surfeited body the soul is starved, and at last the chief good of existence seems to be to show how quiet death is. We long for life, yet despair of life, and do but flatter ourselves that we have hope. There is a baseness in our blood from which springs war between our thoughts and our deeds. We grow weary of the strife and are sick at heart.

“Who will give us,” cries Bossuet, “the power to drink deep and pure delight in the inner parts of the soul, of which the senses do not dream?” And again: “O Israel! listen in the depths of thy being—not on the surface where vain phantoms float, but listen in the depths where the voice of truth is heard.” It is of this the poet speaks when he tells of those who

“ Heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead
The murmur of the fountain-head ;

“ Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenchèd fire.

“ He heeded not reviling tones
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Though curs'd and scorn'd and bruis'd with stones :

“ But looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.”

“Behold,” said St. Stephen, “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.” Divine vision of truth, of hope, of

love! The heavens are open only to eyes which can behold the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God, and love alone can give this second-sight. "Whosoever loves," says St. John, "is born of God." "God is love." "He who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." "He who does not love is dead." The dead see not; and it is not wonderful that those who have not within themselves supernatural life should not know Christ. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." A new kind of life strengthens and enlightens him. He is nourished by "the bread of God, which comes from heaven and gives life." He drinks of waters which revivify and refresh the soul, so that it no longer thirsts. He has eternal life within himself. He sees the double face of things, the beginning and the end, life and death; and through the dark and tangled web of time the light of eternity shines upon him. He hears the voice of the Master: "Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me." And again: "No man cometh to the Father but through me."

"Blessed is he," says Thomas à Kempis, "who knows what it is to love Jesus. . . . Love Him and keep Him for thy friend, who, when all go away, will not leave thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. . . . Be humble and peace-

able, and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and calm, and Jesus will stay with thee. . . . Thou must be bare, and carry a pure heart to God, if thou wilt attend at leisure and taste how sweet is the Lord."

Love reveals Christ to men. They only know Him who love Him, and those who have given up the love of the world for His sake need no other proof of His divinity than the witness of the Spirit within them. His love carries with it its own evidence whence it comes. But that we are able to love Him with a personal love, though He is separated from us by centuries and by forms of national life widely different from ours, is the most striking proof of His divine nature. Who else, of all who have left a name in human history, is really loved? Do men love Socrates, or Plato, or Alexander, or Cæsar, or Dante, or Shakspere, or Confucius, or Mohammed? No. Whatever exalted sentiments these names may inspire, here or anywhere, men do not love them, cannot love them. High thinking delights us, heroic action fires the heart, the strong voice of song lifts us up and bears us on, religious enthusiasm awakens the mystic powers that lie hidden within the soul; but we do not, cannot love the philosopher, the hero, the poet, or the prophet. They are for us but a sounding name, a theme for declamation. They are shadows in a shadowland—airy nothings that flit round us, but find no home within our hearts. They are cold as death, intangible as ghosts, impassive as the grave.

Do men love Jesus Christ? Christianity, my dear brethren; is the supreme fact in human history. Its significance, morally, intellectually, and socially, is paramount. Now, the growth, and power, and permanence of the Christian religion rise out of men's personal love for Christ Jesus. He has won the perennial love of man, because He is more than man--the God-Man. God's world is no longer my world. He has bought it from me with His Blood. I am no longer the centre of the universe, but Jesus Christ, gathering into one the divine and the human, is the pivotal centre of all things; and so love is become the soul of morality, and humility the secret of intellectual growth, and charity the nurse of civilization. *Omnia in omnibus Christus, . . . et omnia in ipso constant.* "The love of Christ constraineth us," says St. Paul. And again:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

("As it is written: For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

"For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might,

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And the echo of this voice rings down the centuries and through the earth. "I love Christ," says St. Agnes. "His love leaves me pure, and, though his spouse, a virgin still." This is the very dream of the heart, and whoever understands it not has never loved. As there is nothing deeper or nearer akin to the soul than ideal love, so is there nothing purer or more infinitely removed from the senses. "Christ's greatest miracle," said Napoleon in solitude, dwelling in thought upon the whole course of human history, "is the reign of charity."

Do men love Jesus Christ? What is the great and only test of love? The gift of one's self. Our time, our money, our services we give to thousands, but the heart to him alone whom we love. What is the great symbol of the gift of one's self? The cross of Jesus Christ. What is more hateful to the natural man than this ignominious wood? But behold how it is transfigured by love, which peoples solitude, makes the desert bloom, enriches poverty, and clothes with beauty contemptible elements. A light falls on the dim domains where the Past holds empire over buried centuries, and I see the lips of countless multitudes, from the king on his throne to the beggar in his rags, pressed in unutterable love to the feet of Jesus hanging on the cross. I behold the earth dotted over with sweet homes of prayer, and song, and peace,

“Upon rock
Aerial, or in green secluded vale,
One after one, collected from afar,
An undissolving fellowship,”

and the light that makes them fair and beautiful is the love of Jesus Christ. Before my eyes pass unnumbered hosts, in hooded vestments wrapped, and moving in calm processions to the chant of sober litanies. They are the lovers of Jesus Christ, “who not a thought will share with the vain world,” but consecrate their lives to heaven revealed to meditation and to love. And, again, I behold, gliding through the dim twilight, the living presences of nuns—

“A gentle, pensive, white-robed sisterhood,
Whose saintly radiance mitigates the gloom
Of those terrestrial fabrics where they serve,
To Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, espoused.”

They have heard the Master’s words: “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.” What is so meek and humble as love? It is God’s eternal, patient servant. It bends the strong to serve the weak; it keeps the mother by the cradle; it draws this white-robed sisterhood to the heart of Jesus Christ. “I was hungry,” he said, “and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.” Behold, the ser-

vice of the poor, the suffering, the weak and helpless children of men is created ; and the tenderest hearts and the fairest souls shall henceforth ask of life no other boon than to rest in the love of Christ while they minister to the least of His brethren.

Account for it as you will, here is the great secular and world-wide fact that tens and hundreds of thousands of men and women, in every generation, love Jesus Christ more than father or mother, or wife or children ; more than home or country, or wealth or fame. They rest in His love ; they find peace to their souls ; they listen for His voice ; they watch for His footsteps ; they tread with Him the narrow way. They follow after Him from year to year. They hear the Baptist proclaim His advent nigh. They hear the angel's glad message to Mary. They are on the hills of Bethlehem, and with the shepherds they go up to worship Him. They hold Him in their hearts as Mary held Him in her arms. With Him they flee to Egypt, and with Him they dwell in the Holy Family at Nazareth. They believe in Him and are not afraid. They love Him, and His love suffices. All is well. "Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change" ; let suffering, let death come—they have known the Highest ; they love Him. "Now, this is eternal life, that they know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent"

IV.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

THE Church is the society of believers founded by Christ in which, by means of a perpetual apostolate, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, those works which the Redeemer performed during his mortal life are continued for the purpose of bringing all men into the way of salvation. The Church is the life and work of Christ; it is His permanent, visible incarnation in the world. It is His city, His kingdom, His empire, His fortress built upon the rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. It is His body and the temple of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in it and is its ever-present and ever-enduring principle of supernatural life, of indefectible power, and of infallible knowledge in whatever concerns the truths of revelation or the deposit of faith. Thus, the Church, though composed of men, is not merely human, but partakes of the double nature of Christ, and, like Him, is at once divine and human, and its attributes, like His own, are seemingly incompatible. It is strong in the midst of weakness; it is holy in the midst of sin; it is subject to growth and decay, and is yet imperishable; it is visible and invisible. The visible, historic

Church is not absolutely the same as the invisible, ideal Church, but it is indissolubly united with it, as the body of Christ is inseparably joined to His divine personality. Its visibility is not an exterior accident superadded to its essence, but it is a part of that essence as the indispensable form of its manifestation. It is in the visible Church that the Spirit of Christ builds up the Church that is unseen.

The Church is one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic. Its essential unity is derived from the Holy Ghost, who is its principle of life. "What the soul is to the body," says St. Augustine, "the Spirit of Jesus Christ is to the Church. He acts in the universal Church as the soul acts in the whole body. A limb that is cut off dies; life remains in the body, but not in the dissevered member; and so the Holy Ghost does not abide with those who have separated themselves from the body of the Church." The Church, then, is one in its principle of life, from which it also derives its unity of organization, of government, of doctrine, and of worship. Opposed to unity are heresy and schism. Heresy violates unity of doctriné, and schism unity of organization and government. Doctrinal error, however, may exist without heresy, according to the well-known word of St. Augustine: "Errare potero, hæreticus non ero." Obstinacy in error, leading to rebellion against the teaching authority of the Church, is heresy, and the obstinacy which results in revolt against its governing power is schism. Since unity is a dis-

tinctive mark of the Church, it follows at once that the whole Catholic system must necessarily rest upon the principle of authority. It is idle to talk of unity in religion where there is no supreme and infallible voice to command obedience. This infallible voice is that of the living Church, which Christ commanded to teach all nations, to which He promised His unfailing help, to which He sent the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, to be for all time its guide and unerring teacher. Authority is as essential to the Church as is the Church to the growth and continuance of Christianity. Authority is the highest social principle. Upon it all law rests, and from it all obedience is derived. If the Church is a society it must necessarily possess authority; if it is a supernatural society it must necessarily possess infallible authority. A book, even though inspired, cannot be the principle of authority in any society. It may be a most serviceable ally and support both of authority and of liberty, just as a written constitution may be a beneficent guide to the legislative and judicial tribunals of the nation; but the national life precedes the documents that contain its theories and principles of government, and it cannot be confined within the limits of a code. In this sense the authority of the Church is higher than that of the New Testament. The Bible is God's infallible word when its true meaning is made known to us by His infallible church; and all other theories concerning its authority will lead to absurdities and contradictions. To make it

the supreme rule of faith is equivalent to a denial of the unity of the Church, and, in the last analysis, of the truth of Christianity.

The Catholicity of the Church is the expansion of its unity. Were it not one it could not be Catholic. A distinction must be made between the principle and the fact of Catholicity. As a matter of fact the Church is not universal: nor are we bound to believe that it is ever destined to become so here on earth. It is its fate rather to live in this world in the midst of conflicts, persecutions, struggles, and trials. It waxes strong here, and there it falls into decay; now it triumphs, and in another age it suffers defeat. When it rises in influence, and wealth and honors are heaped upon it, the gain is not unfrequently offset by a weakening of faith and the loss of religious earnestness; and hence it does not seem to enter into the divine plan to lead the Church on to universal sway over all men and all places, though it was founded to teach the whole truth as revealed by Christ to all men and until the end of time. The Church is thus the embodiment of the universal and absolutely true religion; and in principle and of right it is therefore Catholic, even while its diffusion through the earth remains partial and its actual universality but relative. This relative Catholicity, which admits of degrees, is found in the fact that the Church is not confined to one or several countries, but is spread among many nations and counts adherents in almost every part of the world; and thus the

one faith, with the one form of worship and government, is brought practically within the reach of all men. The opposites of the note of Catholicity are sectarianism and religious nationalism, which, however, is but a form of sectarianism. The essential holiness of the Church is derived from its principle of life, which is the Holy Ghost. This inward and essential sanctity is made manifest in the power to regenerate men and endow them with higher moral and religious strength. The saints—those in whom the love of God and man attains heroic force—are as a seal upon the Church to witness to its divine origin. They give objective reality and historic sequence to its sanctity.

The essential holiness of the Church is distinct from the accidental holiness conferred upon it by the lives of the saints; and though all who believe were sinners, the Church would still be holy, as God is good though the whole race of men is fallen and perverse. The supernatural supposes nature, and grace does not do violence to free will; and hence the accidental sanctity of the Church is relative and variable. It is not necessary that this or that number of its members should be saints; nor is its holiness diminished by the sinful lives of multitudes of nominal Catholics, since their depravity is the result of their wilful disobedience to its spirit and commandments. Nevertheless, as a matter of fact the race of the saints is never extinguished, and in every age many are found whose heroic virtues testify

to the supernatural principle by which their lives are inspired. Faith, hope, and charity, revealed in the immolation of one's self in a life of humility, chastity, and poverty, and sanctioned by special marks of God's favor, discover the saints to us, the chief among whom the Church places in the Canon by a solemn and official pronouncement.

Apostolicity is the fourth note by which the true Church is made known to us. Founded by Christ Jesus on Peter and the apostles, it rises heavenward through the ages as a beacon to all the world. It is to-day, it was yesterday; it is in all the centuries since Christ was born. The other apostolic churches have perished—Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem; Rome alone remains. "Fides vestra annunciatur universo mundo." The transmission of the one Catholic faith from generation to generation is made through a definite and strongly marked channel. The stream rises in the mountain where Christ died, and the priest who to-day in some remote wilderness preaches the Gospel to savages irrigates the barren waste with waters that flow from that fountain-head along historic courses. By this Church, one, Catholic, holy, and apostolic, the world has been converted to Christ. Christians who are separated from its communion descend from ancestors who were baptized in the Catholic faith. As this Church is the organ of Christ, by which His will is made known to men, so is it the channel through which His graces flow to those who are

saved. To recognize the true Church by the marks here indicated, and yet to refuse, from whatever motive, to enter its fold, is to deny Christ and to love this life more than that which is eternal. Hence the apothegm, Out of the Church there is no salvation. True Christianity is found in the Church, and not elsewhere. The Church is the form of the religion of Christ, which thus becomes historic, permanent, consistent with itself. It is this organic form which lifts it out of the region of speculation and abstractions and gives to it a concrete existence.

The Church has a threefold office—viz., teaching, sacred ministry, and rule; and hence Christianity, as Cardinal Newman says, is at once a philosophy, a religious rite, and a political power. The office of teaching finds expression in a system of religious doctrines, that of sacred ministry in a form of worship, and that of rule in an ecclesiastical polity.

DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH.

The chief heads of Catholic doctrine are the following :

There is one God, personal, simple, immutable, free, omnipotent, eternal, infinite, absolute in every kind of perfection, and the creator of all things. In the divine essence there are three persons, really distinct and perfectly equal. God created the world out of nothing. His intelligent creatures are angels, who are bodiless spirits; demons.

who are fallen angels ; and man, whom He created good and upright, and constituted in a state of justice and sanctification. In transgressing the divine command man fell from this happy state, and through this original sin the whole race suffered the loss of God's grace, and hurt even in its natural endowments. Mary alone, in view of the merits of her Divine Son, was exempt, in the very instant of her conception, from this taint of our nature. To redeem the fallen race the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man. He was conceived, through the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was born into the world without a human father. This is Christ, the Saviour, who is true God and true man, and yet but one divine person. By His life, His Passion and death, He satisfied the justice of God and redeemed mankind. God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. He is the Eternal Mediator, who has bridged the chasm that separated heaven from earth, that yawned between the soul and its Creator. From Him as its fountain-head flows the whole economy of salvation. If the Church has authority, if the sacraments have efficacy, it is through Christ and by virtue of their institution by Him. He has not only redeemed the world, but has also given to it the example of the perfect life. To follow after Him is to enter into the way of light and peace that leads to God.

The redemption wrought by Him is applied to the individual soul, through the action of the Holy Ghost, in the form of a special divine force which

is called grace. Christ is both truth and grace—truth with the superadded power which gives to it life and attractiveness. Here is found the new principle which Christianity has introduced into the world, the supernatural germ which confers upon it strength, permanence, and indefectibility.

To obtain the remission of sin, to persevere in the practice of virtue, and finally to attain eternal life, grace is indispensably necessary, since it is through it alone that human acts acquire a supernatural worth and character. It is God's will that all men be saved, and, as this is not possible without grace, it follows that this divine help is given sufficiently to all. "God does not command the impossible," says the Council of Trent, "but when He commands He warns us to do what we are able and to ask for ability to do what is above our strength, and He helps us to be able." Grace is a free gift, and is granted according to the unsearchable designs of God. It does not destroy but heals and strengthens nature, and leaves intact the freedom of the will. Justification includes both the remission of sin and the sanctification of the soul. In the justified there still remains, however, a perverse sensuality, which, so long as the will opposes its suggestions, is not sinful; and the just man can never hold himself free from infirmities and venial sins, and hence his justification, though real, is not perfect.

Faith is the basis and root of all justification, but does not of itself and alone justify. To have this power it must pass from the understanding

into the will and be enkindled into charity. This is the *fides formata, fides viva*, which brings man into vital communion with Christ, liberates from sin, and begets boundless devotion to God. Such faith cannot rest within itself, but must pass into conduct and produce righteousness of life and obedience to God's commandments. Good works springing from this inward supernatural source augment grace and are meritorious of salvation. There is thus an essential connection between religion and morality, and the liberty of the Gospel, far from dispensing the believer from the observance of the commandments, binds him besides to a higher, purer, and severer ethical code.

The ordinary channels of grace are the sacraments, through which, according to the Council of Trent, all true holiness begins, or is increased, or is regained. The sacraments are seven—viz., Baptism, Penance, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Order, and Matrimony; and they were all instituted by Christ and derive their efficacy from Him. They descend from Calvary, and are as the veins and arteries through which His blood flows and is communicated to the souls of believers. A sacrament is a visible sign of invisible grace, instituted by Christ for our justification. It at once symbolizes and effects holiness and justice. It is not a mere ceremony, but a rite with inherent efficacy, which confers grace, according to the theological phrase, *ex opere operato*.

The sacraments form a system, an organism, which is adapted to man's nature and corresponds

to his wants, whether as an individual or as a member of society. Order and Matrimony are the social sacraments; the other five relate more directly to the needs of the individual soul. Baptism is the new birth of the spiritual life, Confirmation is its growth and increase in strength, Holy Eucharist is its food and nourishment, Penance is the healing and reinvigorating of the soul wounded and weakened by sin, and Extreme Unction is as a seal of divine favor set upon a life now finished and ready for transfiguration into immortality.

The propagation of the race is sanctified by Matrimony, and the ministers of Christ's Church are engendered and multiplied through the sacrament of Holy Orders. The Incarnation, the Church, the sacraments—in a word, the whole economy of the Christian religion—have as their end God's glory and the salvation of man, whose eternal destiny depends upon the use or abuse of his natural and supernatural endowments.

After death comes judgment, in which the lot of the soul is irrevocably and for ever decided.

In the life to come there are two final states for those who have passed through this—that of the blessed in heaven and that of the lost in hell. Not all, however, who die free from the guilt of deadly sin, which involves eternal separation from God, enter at once into the heavenly kingdom; but those who have not fully satisfied the divine justice for their transgressions, or who may be stained by venial faults, are received into a middle state,

in which, by suffering and the supplications of the Church, they are purified and made worthy of the beatific vision. The ground for receiving the system of Catholic doctrine is the authority of the Church, which, holding the faith directly from Christ, preserves and interprets it, for all time, under the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost. What the soul is to the body of a man, according to the teaching of St. Augustine, that the Holy Ghost is to the body of Christ, which is the Church. The preaching of the apostles, and not the written word, was the original rule of faith, the divinely appointed means of propagating the truths of Christianity, and the composition of the scriptures of the New Testament in no way diminished the force of the living voice of the Church, which interprets with infallible authority the doctrines of revelation, whether they be found in the apostolic writings or in ecclesiastical tradition. The faith was preached before the New Testament was written ; it is not derived from it, but from that higher source which attests both the canon and the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures. The Church is not dependent on the New Testament, but the believer is dependent on the Church for the certainty of his faith in the authority and inspiration of the Bible as of all other revealed doctrines.

WORSHIP.

The Church teaches that God is the object of all religious worship, whether it be addressed to

Him directly or through the mediation of others. The honor paid to the Blessed Virgin and the saints is religious only because it regards them in their relationship with God, whose goodness and wisdom, and mercy and purity are reflected in their lives, though feebly and according to the imperfect capabilities of human nature. The worship which springs from faith, reverence, and love is true and spiritual; and when these interior dispositions are wanting, external acts of religion are valueless and unmeaning. There is, however, necessarily a material and sensible element in all human worship, since we cannot even think without making use of signs or symbols of thought. Hence a purely spiritual worship is not possible for man.

Prayer, which is an instinct of our religious nature, is the universal expression of our sense of God's presence and of our dependence on Him. It is the voice of faith, which gives utterance to the soul's innermost knowledge, feeling, and desire. It is the protestation of our certainty of the reality of the unseen world; and on earth only man prays, as he alone thinks and loves.

Prayer, like thought and love, may remain shut up within the soul, and so exist only as an internal act; but, like thought and love, it seeks to embody itself in words and deeds, and outward ordinances are as necessary to the vigor and growth of religious faith as language to the education of the mind. "Those who pray," says St. Augustine, "take the posture of a suppliant. They bend the knee, they raise the hands, they bow the

head, and make use of every suitable means to manifest their sentiments; not that God does not know the disposition of the heart without such signs, but because these outward acts move man to pray with more humility and fervor."

Sacrifice is a form of prayer, and the commemoration, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, of the Passion and death of the God-Man is the central point, the very heart, of Catholic worship. In this sacrament, according to the doctrine of the Church, Christ is really present, and to Him there present, though hidden under a mystic veil, adoration and homage is offered. The altar upon which He reposes is the throne of honor, the seat of mercy, the centre of religious life and service. Over this altar the temple is built, and around it cluster sacred rites and ceremonies. The perpetual light burns before the tabernacle in token of the presence there of the living Christ. The people kneel to adore Him, to praise Him, to supplicate Him. They begin and end with the sign of the cross to confess their faith in the redemption wrought by His blood, and their faces are turned to the altar in acknowledgment of His presence there. Out of this faith the entire liturgy is developed. Since the Eucharist is not only a sacrament but a sacrifice also, this clean oblation can be offered to God by the priest alone. When he approaches the altar to celebrate the heavenly mystery he enters the atmosphere of the supernatural and puts away as far as possible whatever belongs to the common earthly life. He is

clad in symbolic vestments. The amice is the helmet of salvation ; the alb is purity of life ; the cincture is readiness to meet the Lord ; the maniple is the power of faith to wipe away the tears of those that weep ; the stole is the joyousness of immortal life ; the chasuble is the sweetness and light of Christ.

At the altar the priest offers sacrifice and prayer ; he addresses himself not to the people but to God through Christ Jesus, and need not, therefore, speak a language understood by the people. The Latin, which was the language of the greater part of the civilized world at the time the Christian religion was first preached, naturally became the liturgical and sacramental language of the churches founded throughout the Roman Empire ; and for centuries the speech of the barbarians who had overthrown the power of the Cæsars was altogether too rude and incoherent for such sacred uses. Hence the Latin was retained during the period in which the modern languages were in process of development ; and since in an empire like the Catholic Church, which extends its sway over many peoples, the adoption of an official language tends to strengthen the bonds of unity and facilitates uniformity of worship and discipline, it is not probable that in this matter any change will ever be introduced. The priest is sent by Christ not only to offer sacrifice and to administer the sacraments, but also to announce the Gospel ; and preaching, consequently, is an important element of Christian worship, and in the fulfilment of this

office the language of the people is, as a matter of course, employed.

The Virgin Mother and the saints are associated with the Saviour in the worship of the Catholic Church, though the honor given to them is altogether relative and of an inferior kind. They are nearer to God than common Christians, and their intercessions have peculiar efficacy. The faithful are therefore taught to have recourse to them, that they may be helped by their prayers. The Catholic, in praying, asks God to have mercy on him; he asks the Blessed Virgin and the saints to intercede for him. It is only through Jesus Christ and in His name that he obtains what he receives through the supplications of the saints, who themselves pray only through Christ Jesus, and are heard for His name's sake. In keeping alive the memory of the saints in its public worship the Church preserves for the instruction and imitation of the faithful the highest and worthiest examples of Christian life, which, as they stand forth century after century and in every part of the earth, bear witness not only to its historic character, but proclaim also its unity, its holiness, and its Catholicity. The veneration of the saints heightens the poetic and dramatic effect of public worship, which, according to the Catholic idea, should be attended by all the beauty and splendor which art can throw around it; and therefore architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and eloquence are all introduced to do homage to Christ and His saints; and hence also the use of sacred images, which is explained

in the following words of a decree of the Council of Trent: "The images of Christ, and of the Virgin Mother, and of other saints are to be had and retained with due honor and veneration, especially in churches—not that they are supposed to possess any divinity or virtue for which reverence should be shown them, or prayer offered to them, or confidence placed in them, after the manner of heathens, who hoped in idols; but because the honor thus shown is referred to the originals, and when we kiss these images, or bow to them or kneel before them, we adore Christ and venerate His saints whom they represent." When Catholics pray before the crucifix they worship Christ, who was nailed to the cross for the sins of men; and when they kiss the Bible they do homage to the word of God which it contains. In a similar manner is the honor paid to relics to be understood.

Honor, like love, to which it is akin, reaches out beyond the individual to his children, his friends, and even to his remains, whose resting-place is surrounded with respect and marked by some memorial of the affection and veneration of the survivors. But as these manifestations of reverence are not indispensable, the Church, without in aught modifying its doctrine, permits, according to time and place, a wide latitude in exterior observances, and, far from making all piety consist in devotion to the saints, it merely affirms, in opposition to those who scoff at such practices, that this devotion is "good and useful."

The Catholic doctrine that good works are

meritorious in the sight of God is not without its influence upon the worship of the Church. Christ, it teaches, has atoned in the fullest manner for the sins of men by His Passion and death, but the fruits of this redemption are not always so applied to the soul that they exempt the sinner from all the temporal penalties of his misdeeds, even when the guilt which deserves eternal punishment has been taken away. Hence arises the necessity of a penitential discipline which subjects the repentant sinner to prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other works by which he may more fully satisfy the justice of God for his transgressions; and when, on account of the fervor of his contrition or for other good cause, the Church remits a part or all of this penalty, she is said to grant an *indulgence*. This is the doctrine of the Council of Trent, which declares that the power to grant indulgences has been given to the Church by Jesus Christ, and that the custom is salutary, though, it adds, it should be held within proper bounds, lest ecclesiastical discipline should thereby be relaxed. Those who depart this life in the state of grace, but without having satisfied the divine justice for their sins, are purified by suffering in another world; and as there is a communion of saints here on earth, the Church teaches that this bond is not dissolved by death, and that the souls in purgatory may be helped by our prayers and other good works. Hence originates the custom of praying for the dead and of offering up the sacrifice of the Mass for their eter-

nal repose. Popular beliefs and practices are found in the Church, here and there, strong in this century and dying away in another, which are not a part of Catholic teaching, but are merely suffered to exist, because human nature will go to excess and it is better to believe too much than too little. The wheat and the cockle grow in the same soil, and Christ has said that it would be unwise to attempt to separate them before the harvest time. Devotion partakes greatly of a subjective and personal character; and worship, which springs from faith and love, cannot easily be held within the limits of formal rules.

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT.

Religious society, both in its idea and in fact, precedes all others, since man's relations to his Creator are necessarily prior to those which bind him to his fellow-man, and history teaches that a priesthood existed before kingdoms and empires. Religion is the vital principle of social life.

Domestic society also precedes the civil order or the state. The essential constitution of the family is founded in the law of nature and cannot be modified by the civil power.

Civil society takes its origin in the political union of families, without which there could be no peace or progress, no science or art. The original and fundamental constitution of society is therefore threefold—religious, domestic, and political. These three forms of human associa-

tion are all ordained of God, and hence, from a theoretical point of view at least, their interaction and relations should be harmonious. The Church is an independent and sovereign society with a constitution and government of its own. In its constitution the elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy are harmoniously blended. The faithful are divided into clergy and laity. The clergy constitute the hierarchy established by Christ to teach His doctrine, to administer His sacraments, and to rule His people. Between the priesthood and the laity there is an essential and sacramental distinction; and in the priesthood itself there are degrees of rank and authority. The spiritual sovereignty does not belong, and never has belonged, to the community of believers; and though at times, in the history of the Church, the suffrages of the people have been taken to determine the choice of the ministers of religion, it has never been held that elections of this kind could confer authority or jurisdiction. In constituting the twelve apostles the pillars of the Church Christ did not confer upon them all equal power. He placed one of them, Simon Peter, over the whole body, as its head, and clothed him with the plenitude of the threefold authority confided to the Church. He gave to him the primacy as priest, as teacher, and as ruler; and hence the government of the Church is predominantly monarchical. The office of Peter is not one of honor merely, but of jurisdiction. In virtue of

his primacy he has full and sovereign authority over the whole Church in matters of faith and morals, and also in questions of discipline and government: and this authority descends to his successors and is thus made indefectible. The see of Peter is the centre and bond of Catholic unity. The head of an infallible Church must himself, in his official capacity, be infallible, since when the head errs the whole body is led astray. This prerogative of the Apostolic See, which is implied in the general idea of the Church as held by Catholics from the beginning, was solemnly proclaimed in a well-known decree of the Vatican Council.

All the functions of ecclesiastical government are not, however, absorbed in the primacy. The pope does not rule alone, but governs with and through the bishops, priests, and ministers, who form part of the divinely constituted hierarchy. The bishops are the successors of the apostles, and, like them, are foundation-stones of the Christian temple. Their succession is not traced in each case to some one of the apostles—*non singuli singulis*, as the phrase is—but the bishops are the successors of the apostles, inasmuch as they constitute a body corporate in communion with the head and centre of Christian unity. The episcopate is the heir of the apostolate. Each bishop has jurisdiction over the diocese confided to him, and within its territory he is invested with legislative, judicial, and executive authority. He is a pastor, and not merely the

vicar of the pope. The bishops, moreover, as a body corporate, in communion with the head, take part in the government of the universal Church; have a voice in œcumenical councils, in which, conjointly with the Sovereign Pontiff, they make laws of general discipline and pronounce in controversies concerning the faith. Absolute, unlimited, or arbitrary power is not recognized either in the pope or the bishops, but the authority of both is tempered by the spirit of gentleness and humility, which is the spirit of Christ; by the fixed and impassable bounds within which He has confined the essential elements of the constitution of the Church; and, finally, by the special assistance and guidance of the Holy Ghost. The priests and inferior ministers take rank after the bishops, but their prerogatives do not confer upon them external jurisdiction or the right to participate in the government of the Church. Their chief concern is the administration of the sacraments, the preaching of the Gospel, and the performance of public worship.

Though the government of the Church is not democratic, yet there is, as has been stated, an element of democracy in its constitution. The end of its existence is the good and welfare of the people—*res publica, res populi*; and it is the special duty of the hierarchy to provide for the wants of all, and above all for those of the ignorant, the poor, and the afflicted. Again, though the spiritual sovereignty is not confided to the people, the ranks of the hierarchy are thrown open to all.

The peasant's son, if he be found worthy, may ascend step by step until he reach the Supreme Pontificate. Merit, and not birth or rank, is the only recognized qualification for office ; and in the eyes of the Church all men are brothers and substantially equal. The hierarchy, together with the fundamental ecclesiastical constitution, is of divine institution, but the details of government are variable. The pope, as the head of a world-wide empire, surrounds himself with ministers and counsellors, the chief of whom are called cardinals. The number of cardinals never exceeds seventy. Fourteen of these are cardinal deacons, and the remainder, with the exception of the six cardinal bishops, are cardinal priests. Upon the death of a pope the cardinals assemble in conclave and choose one of their colleagues to succeed him. The general business of the pontifical court, which extends to every part of the world and embraces a multitude of interests, is transacted through Congregations of cardinals, to each of which is assigned a special sphere of jurisdiction.

The Congregation of the Inquisition watches over the purity of the faith, censures heretical doctrines, and pronounces in questions concerning morals and the administration of the sacraments. The Congregation of the Index is supplementary to that of the Inquisition.

The Congregation of Rites has charge of whatever relates to the ceremonial worship of the Church, and decides disputed points concerning

the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass, the reading of the offices of the breviary, and the manner of administering the sacraments. It takes cognizance also of demands for the canonization of saints. To the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars are referred questions and controversies that arise in the various religious orders, and also differences between bishops and the religious orders, unless the points in dispute are embraced in the decrees of the Council of Trent, in which case the matter is turned over to a congregation specially created to watch over the execution and interpretation of those decrees of the council which relate to discipline, the reformation of morals, and kindred subjects.

The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith has charge of the Catholic missions throughout the world. There are various other congregations and committees to which special branches of the ecclesiastical administration are confided, of which mention need not here be made. The Church is divided territorially into patriarchates, provinces, dioceses, vicariates-apostolic, parishes, and missions. The Council of Lateran ordained that after the Church of Rome, which is the mother and mistress of churches, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem should take rank as patriarchates in the order in which they are here named.

The ecclesiastical province is composed of dioceses or vicariates-apostolic, united under the authority of an archbishop. The diocese is the ter-

ritory subject to the jurisdiction of a bishop. The parish is the part of a diocese assigned to the charge of a pastor. The vicariate-apostolic and the mission are territorial divisions which correspond to the diocese and the parish, but differ from them in having a less perfect organization. They are rudimentary dioceses and parishes, and are the form in which the Catholic apostolate is organized for the work of the missions. The people are subject to the pastor, the pastor is under the authority of the bishop, several bishops are united under the jurisdiction of an archbishop, and all owe obedience to the pope. This, Leibnitz says, is the model of a perfect government. According to returns published in Rome in 1878, there are in the Catholic world twelve patriarchates, one hundred and seventy-three archbishoprics, and seven hundred and nineteen bishoprics. The total number of patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops is eleven hundred and eighty.

An œcumenical council is an assembly of all the bishops of the Catholic world, who, under the presidency of the Roman Pontiff or his legates, define articles of faith and draw up disciplinary decrees. The bishops alone are entitled by divine right to a voice in a council of the whole Church, but the ecclesiastical law has conferred this privilege upon cardinals, mitred abbots, and the generals of the religious orders of regulars, on account of their quasi-episcopal jurisdiction over their own subjects. A plenary council is a con-

gress of all the bishops of a particular country, assembled under the presidency of the primate or a delegate apostolic. A provincial council is a synod of the bishops of an ecclesiastical province, and its president is the metropolitan archbishop.

These assemblies have not the power to define articles of faith, but are convened to regulate discipline, to correct abuses, and to settle disputes; and their decrees, in order to have the force of law, must be approved by the pope. A diocesan synod is a council of the priests of a diocese, presided over by the bishop, who alone is invested with legislative and definitive power. According to the general law of the Church, provincial councils should be held every three years, and diocesan synods annually.

The pope is elected by the cardinals, and is always chosen from among the members of the sacred college. The manner of electing bishops is regulated by the Sovereign Pontiff, and is variable, according to times and places. In no case, however, is it permitted to proceed to the consecration of a bishop until the papal bulls granting authority have been received.

RELATIONS OF RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL SOCIETY.

The perfect distinction between Church and state is perhaps the most striking peculiarity of Christian history. From the beginning Christians drew a line between God and Cæsar, between

fidelity to conscience and loyalty to the government.

The spiritual and political powers are both sovereign and separate. They differ from one another in their essence, in their constitution, in the end for which they exist, and in the means of which they make use. They are not, however, or ought not to be, enemies; and though each, in its own sphere, is independent of the other, the greatest good of the greatest number, whether here or hereafter, is attainable only when these two powers co-operate to this end. As the temporal and the eternal happiness of man are both ordered by God's law, the societies to which these interests are committed should work in harmony; and conflict can arise only when the one or the other is guilty of usurpation. Freedom of conscience, which is the mother of civil liberty, is protected and guarded by the separation of the religious and the civil authority; and this great fact, whose existence in history is due chiefly to the action of the Papacy, is thus the salvation and the glory of Christian civilization. The objection that the co-existence of two supreme, distinct, and independent societies destroys social unity and creates a divided allegiance fails to recognize that this division of authority and jurisdiction is necessary to the maintenance of religious and civil liberty, and that the two sovereign powers safeguard freedom through the limitations placed upon the sphere of action within which each is confined. Neither the state nor the Church is permitted

to absorb the whole man, and hence where the Church is free, absolutism cannot exist. The allegiance of the Catholic is not divided. He yields full and entire obedience to the state in all matters that are within the sphere of its competence, and he recognizes this duty as part of his religious faith. He obeys the Church in the same way, and finds that his devotion to his religion does not in the least interfere with his loyalty to the government. His allegiance is double and not divided. This is the rule, to which, of course, there may be exceptions; and if a case should arise in which the commands of the two authorities clash, the path of duty, if not plain, would have to be discovered by considerations applicable to the case in point. Difficulties of this kind, however, do not concern Catholics alone, but all men who recognize the dictates of conscience as the supreme rule of conduct. If the state should forbid the use of wine, and Protestants should hold, as many do hold, that it is their duty to partake of the cup in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they would doubtless recognize the imperative urgency of appealing from Cæsar to God. The temporal power exercised by the popes over the Christian world during the middle ages was founded in the public law of the times.

The various peoples, as they accepted the faith, were drawn by bonds of religion and common interests towards the Supreme Pastor of the Church, and so formed an international society, a Christendom, whose spiritual head was the

pope, who at the same time was made arbiter of disputes between nations and between rulers and their subjects. This power was exceptional and was demanded by the needs of society at that epoch. In its exercise the popes followed principles then universally received; and though the position thus assigned to them was not without serious dangers, it enabled them to do for religion and civilization what no other power could have done. "Providence might have otherwise ordained," says Milman in his *Latin Christianity*, "but it is impossible for a man to imagine by what other organizing or consolidating force the commonwealth of Western nations could have grown up to a discordant, indeed, and conflicting league, but still a league with that unity and conformity of manners, usages, laws, religion, which have made their rivalries, oppugnancies, and even their long, ceaseless wars, on the whole to issue in the noblest, highest, most intellectual form of civilization known to man. . . . It is impossible to conceive what had been the confusion, the lawlessness, the chaotic state of the middle ages without the mediæval Papacy." It is scarcely necessary to state that it does not follow that the benefits rendered to the commonwealth of nations in past ages by the political supremacy of the pope would, did his supremacy still exist, be rendered now. The Vatican definition of papal infallibility does not in any way affect the relations of the Church with the civil power. The pope's infallibility is not more extensive than that of the Church, which has

always been believed; and the authority which the council declares ever to have belonged to him he has for centuries exercised. "Before the council," says Cardinal Newman, "there was the rule of obedience, and there were exceptions to the rule; and since the council the rule remains, and with it the possibility of exceptions."

Liberty and toleration, which enter so largely into the constitution of civil society, especially in our day, cannot be left out of sight when there is question of the relations of Church and state.

Liberty, as Catholics understand the word, is not the right to do whatever one may please to do. This is rather the idea of license, which is the negation of liberty and of society. That man is endowed with free will is a doctrine of the Church and a fact, but the exercise of this faculty should be controlled by reason and by law. Man is free to do evil, but he has not the right to do evil. Hence when there is question of lawful liberty there can be no thought of absolute liberty. Political society is based upon the sacrifice which the individual makes of a portion of his natural freedom, in order that he may thereby secure benefits which are greater than that freedom. Duty is the basis of the moral, and consequently of the social order; and duty is not possible without self-denial, self-conquest. Our duties determine our rights, since we may demand of others only what they are in duty bound to give us. As it is man's duty to obey God, and thereby to attain to his own highest destiny, he has a divine and inalien-

able right to whatever is necessary to this end ; and this right is the foundation and bulwark of all true liberty.

It is from this principle that the spirit of freedom is derived which rebels against the pagan constitution of society, according to which the state has the right to absorb the whole activity of man, to control his private life, to regulate his duties and even his pleasures ; and the tendency to attribute to the state a quasi-omnipotence at the expense of the individual, the family, and the Church is invariably an evidence of the decay of Christian faith, as it is also clearly a mark of a servile habit of thought and sentiment. Society which in its principles and morals is faithful to the law of God is worthy to be free ; and in such a society the government will make itself felt as little as possible, its action being confined chiefly to enforcing respect for the rights of others and to the maintenance of equilibrium among the social forces. The sense of duty will create the spirit of obedience, and obedience to law, founded in justice and equity, is liberty. As to the liberty of the press and freedom of conscience, it is plain that no society can commit itself to the principle that its exercise should be unhampered by restraint of any kind. With us, for example, the liberty of the press does not extend to the publication of obscene matter, and it is still further restricted by the law of libel ; and we do not hold that under the plea of liberty of conscience men should be permitted to practise

polygamy or free-love, or offer human sacrifices. All men who are not enemies of society itself must agree that unrestricted liberty is license; and hence differences that may arise between the Church and state on this point will be found to relate, as a rule, to policy and not to principle. Liberty of conscience, when properly defined, is a doctrine which Catholics accept and have always accepted. "Those who have never received the Christian faith," says St. Thomas, "should not in any way be forced to adopt it, because faith depends on the will." And in answer to the question as to whether liberty of worship should be granted to infidels, he says: "Human government, having its source in the divine government, ought, as far as possible, to be modelled after its pattern. Now, God, though all-powerful and infinitely good, does not cease to permit evils to exist, though He might prevent them. He suffers this because an opposite course would deprive man of some greater good—as, for example, liberty—or because from such a course still greater evils would result. Hence, although the religious rites of infidels are sinful, they must nevertheless be tolerated, whether on account of the good that may be in them or from fear of the evils that might arise from their suppression."

Tolerance and intolerance depend less upon a man's principles than upon his mental and moral habits. Every shade of religious belief and unbelief may co-exist with the spirit of tolerance and also with the spirit of intolerance. The atheist

and the theist, the Jew and the Christian, the Protestant and the Catholic, may, according to circumstances, be tolerant or intolerant, and, whether they persecute or grant the largest liberty, they find no difficulty in reconciling either course with their belief or unbelief. Men may indeed be passionate lovers of liberty and yet fanatical persecutors, as the history of New England sufficiently shows.

Charity and humility tend, as a rule, to make us merciful and tolerant, and hence the Christian religion, which creates these virtues, has been and is the world's great fountain-head of mercy and toleration. But the habit of forbearance and patience, whether with regard to the faults or the opinions of others, must, like all habits, be acquired, and it will therefore be chiefly found in those who are surrounded by influences that are favorable to its cultivation. Where a whole people are united in one faith they will not readily tolerate those who seek to destroy the harmony of religious belief; and if unity is a mark of Christian truth, it is surely not desirable that they should act otherwise. They defend the unity of religious society with the same ardor and with more or less the same weapons with which they defend the unity of the national life when it is attacked. But where men who hold different creeds are intermingled in society they will inevitably end by tolerating one another—if for no other reason, from mere weariness of strife and collision. Again, where men have no religious faith at all

they will, as a rule, from sheer indifference, grow to be tolerant. We easily allow free scope to opinions and practices for which we care nothing.

The toleration which exists so widely at present throughout the civilized world is the result of the interaction of many causes. The Christian doctrines concerning the worth of the soul, the inviolability of conscience, the brotherhood of all men, the distinction between Church and state, the duty of charity and justice even to the slave, created, little by little, a social condition in which the spirit of a true and wise tolerance was naturally developed; and this spirit would have continued to grow and diffuse itself with the progress of learning and the refinement of manners, even had the harmony and unity of the Christian religion not been broken by the heresies and schisms of the sixteenth century. The multitude of religions, however, together with the infidelity and indifference which were the inevitable results of this crisis in European history, have, in conjunction with industry and commerce and the more frequent and rapid intercourse made possible by mechanical inventions, greatly accelerated and otherwise modified the movement of the modern nations towards larger liberty and toleration. As to the form of civil government the Church is indifferent, and leaves the people to shape their political constitutions upon monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic principles, according to their customs and preferences.

Whatever the form of government may be,

there are interests which concern alike the Church and the state, and which neither, consequently, should be asked to abandon. The question of education at once suggests itself as the most important of these common interests, and the one concerning which conflict of authority has in our day most frequently arisen.

Whoever educates necessarily influences, whether for good or evil, man's whole being. In thought we separate the intellect from the conscience and the soul from the body, but in the living man they are always united, and to develop the one without at the same time acting upon the other is not possible; and hence a school system which professes to eliminate religious and moral truth from the process of education, and to impart secular knowledge alone, commits itself to an impossible task. The thoughts, opinions, sentiments, the morals, laws, and history, of a people are all interpenetrated by and blended with their religious beliefs; and the attempt to eliminate religion from knowledge, sentiment from morality, or the past history of a people from its present life is as absurd as would be the effort to abstract from the character of the man the agencies and influences that wrought upon him in childhood and in youth. As the child is father of the man, so is faith the mother of knowledge; and the deepest and highest form of faith is religious faith. Hence when the state organizes a system of education from which the teaching of religious doctrines is excluded, it fatally, though possibly un-

consciously and negatively, commits itself to an irreligious and infidel propagandism; since to ignore religious doctrines while striving to develop the intellectual and moral faculties must result in the gradual extinction of faith, as the disuse of an organ or a faculty superinduces atrophy and gradual disappearance. The plea that the Church is the proper place for religious instruction is not to the point; for, if religion is true or valuable, it must, like the air of heaven, envelop and interpenetrate the whole life of man; and hence to exclude it from the daily, systematic efforts to awaken in the child quicker perception and fuller consciousness is equivalent to a denial of its truth and efficacy; and the practical tendency of such a school system will inevitably lie in the direction of its logical bearing.

Religion, which is the bond between the Creator and the creature, founds, both in idea and in fact, the first society. The first association of human beings, however, both in idea and in fact, is the family, whose essential constitution looks not merely to the propagation of the race, but above all, to its education; since without the family the race might be propagated, while it is not conceivable that without it, it could, in any proper sense, be educated. Hence parents are the natural educators, and any system which tends to weaken their control over their children or interferes with the free exercise of their natural rights is radically vicious. It is therefore the duty of both Church and state to co-operate with the family in

the work of education, since when the spirit of the school is in conflict with the spirit which prevails in the child's home, the result must necessarily be an incomplete and inharmonious type of manhood. A state which professes to tolerate different forms of religion contradicts its own principles and becomes intolerant whenever it compels its citizens to support a uniform system of schools. Such a system, if it ignores or excludes all religious instruction, does violence to the consciences of all sincere and thoughtful believers; and if it teaches the tenets of some one creed, it wrongs those of a different faith. Nor is it possible to escape from the difficulty by accepting the beliefs which are common to all. As a matter of fact, in the modern state no such common beliefs exist, since there are sects of atheists, materialists, and pantheists in all countries in which the bond of Christian unity has been broken. But, even if this were not so, beliefs which are common to a multitude of sects are not held in common, but as parts of integral systems which are distinct and unlike, and to separate them from the organism to which they belong is to mutilate them and thereby to deprive them of their true meaning and efficacy.

The state, therefore, which tolerates different forms of religion is thereby debarred from the right to establish a uniform school system; and yet it is unreasonable to ask the state to do nothing to promote and spread education, since, after religion, education is the chief agent of civ-

ilization, and, in the absence of governmental aid - and supervision, many parents, and ministers of religion even, will either altogether neglect this most important work or at best perform it in an inefficient and careless manner. In a free state, then, where religious tolerance is a fundamental principle of law, the government, in fostering education, is bound to respect scrupulously the rights of the family and liberty of conscience; and this it cannot do, if the schools are supported by taxation, except by instituting what is known as the denominational system of education. The practical difficulties to be overcome are not insuperable; and since there is question here of a fundamental principle of free government, the obstacles to its practical acceptance and enforcement should but serve to inspire just and enlightened statesmen with a more determined will to remove them. If, however, the state should establish a school system from which religion is excluded, it becomes the imperative duty of Catholics to found schools to which they can, with a safe conscience, send their children; and if, instead of doing this, they remain passive, with a sort of vague hope that somehow or other a change for the better will be brought about, they have denied the faith, according to the doctrine of St. Paul: "But if any man have not care of his own, and especially those of his house, he hath denied the faith."

V.

THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD.

MOST reverend and reverend fathers and dear brethren, we are gathered here to-day to do honor to the noble and great-hearted men who planted in the wilderness this nursery of priests, from which, for a quarter of a century now, faithful laborers have gone forth year after year to sow throughout the Northwest the good seed of the Gospel and to reap the whitening grain waiting for the hand of the harvester. They trusted the word of the Divine Master, that to the believer all things are possible, and laid the foundations of this institution at a time when it seemed premature to those who, before all things, wish to be safe. They drew their inspiration and their courage from faith, and hope, and love, and not from the formal calculations of a convenient wisdom. It is not my office to speak their panegyric, but I may at least recall their memory and appeal to their high example in entering upon the subject proper of my discourse. We have not come hither merely to do honor to names, however worthy. There is question here of an interest so sacred, so exalted, so intimately blended with the

progress of religion and the holiest and loftiest aspirations of the soul, that our thoughts are borne beyond and above the significance of the individual, though he were the best and the greatest. Those who take what may be called an external view of the Church are invariably impressed with her strength and vitality, which are equally manifest in her past struggles and triumphs and in her present hold upon the faith and love of millions of her children. She is a permanent fact in the midst of a changing world, with whose institutions and progress her life is nevertheless so intertwined that again and again she has seemed about to be buried under the ruins of falling civilizations, or to be engulfed in the social and religious upheavals that have marked the birth of new eras in the history of the Christian nations. But when the waters subside the ark of God is seen upon the holy mountain; and this happens not once or twice, but again and again, century after century, and in many places and under ever-varying conditions. In the beginning the little flock is so helpless that the uplifted finger of a proconsul, one would think, might have for ever scattered it; and yet it withstands the repeated onslaughts of imperial Rome, and when Cæsar's throne crumbles Peter's chair is not broken. Heresies creep in and schisms break forth; barbarians invade the sanctuary and darkness overspreads the world; an age of violence and ignorance brings on fierce conflicts between the rulers of the earth and the representatives of religion. The temporal power

usurps the rights of the Church and entrusts her sacred gifts to unworthy hands; the shepherds abandon the flocks and wolves enter the fold. The spirit of nationalism opposes the spread of Christ's kingdom, and new heresies are born; nation after nation breaks loose from Catholic unity, and death seems ready to trample the divine temple to fragments. Religious wars and controversies prepare the soil for rank unbelief, and the sceptics ransack the literatures of all nations in search of arguments against the faith. Altars are overturned, and the social fabric gives way, and from the midst of the ruins the flames of the great revolution burst forth. Priests are butchered or driven into exile; the sacred bell is silent, and in the holy place the image of uncleanness is enthroned. The Vicar of Christ is delivered up to scoffers; and while the children of the Church lay hands upon their mother, the world seems to be passing more and more under the control of the Protestant nations. They conquer empires, and cultivate waste places, and ascend rivers, and penetrate forests, and delve into the inward parts of the earth. Their eyes are upon matter and they peer into the mysteries of nature. They make progress and grow rich; they widen their boundaries and find the world too narrow for an energy that is without limit. The tree of knowledge waves its luminous branches over all things, letting in the light where darkness had been eternal; and those who gather its fruit proclaim loudly that it alone contains the seed of everlasting life,

as through it has come increase of physical enjoyment and social comfort. Science usurps the seat of religion, and faith diminishes as the shadows grow short when the sun is mounting to its zenith. Hence on all sides the creeds of the sects are going to pieces, and in the wide ocean of unbelief the shipwrecked grasp a plank or spar as best they may, like drowning men who catch at straws. Without unity, without the possibility of uniting, and with an ever-increasing sense of their broken and helpless state, the Protestant churches drift with the current of the time, without chart or compass, on a shoreless sea. In the midst of this world, that is ever dying and ever nascent, and in the very centre of most rapid and ceaseless change, the Catholic Church remains a permanent and abiding fact. She has suffered assault from all foes, from all opposing powers: from kings and warriors, from statesmen and philosophers, from poets and scholars, from parliaments and peoples, from the ignorance and corruption of her own children, from the worldliness and low-mindedness of her ministers, from the violence of barbarism and the effeminate vices of civilization. She has been exalted and she has been humbled; she has ruled and she has borne the chain of servitude; she has dwelt in palaces and she has lived in the desert. The highest have bowed before her and the lowest have spurned her. Millions have died for her; millions have sought to destroy her. Her fate has seemed to be bound up with that of a hundred causes which have perished, and she alone

survives. And though she is ever the same, she is ever active, teaching, exhorting, reproving, arguing, contending. To-day, as a thousand years ago, her missionaries are found in the midst of barbarous peoples and savage tribes; her hospitals and asylums for the sick and the homeless are in all the cities of the world; she vies with great states in building schools. She has her universities, and men who know the sciences and men of the broadest culture are among the humblest of her children. Empires rise up to crush her, and, as in the beginning, she stands immovable. As she is armed against tyranny, her enemies have thought that liberty would be fatal to her; and in the midst of freedom she is most vigorous, most prosperous. As she has lived in ages of ignorance, they have imagined that enlightenment would destroy her power; and in the nineteenth century, in the very centre of European culture, her progress has been such that the old weapons of persecution and calumny are again brought forth to stop her onward march.

If we turn now from this general view of the strength and permanence of the Church to consider her life more nearly, we are at once brought face to face with a mystery of feebleness in the midst of power, and of littleness united with greatness. The Church is certainly a fortress built upon the solid rock, against which no enemy shall prevail; but she is also represented to us under the image of a boat tossed upon angry waves and buffeted by the tempest. When we

consider her life during the course of centuries and as extending throughout the earth, her chronic vigor and indefectible vitality are most manifest; but when we watch her struggles in almost any period of her history and in whatever part of the world, she seems to labor like one whose task is beyond his strength. And it is, indeed, hardly conceivable that this should not be so, so long as man's nature remains sensual, his heart filled with pride, and his mind studious of novelty. Corruption, rebellion, and heresy are hereditary and ineradicable evils enrooted in our fallen nature; and as it is the glory of the Church never to consent to this taint in our blood, but to contend against what the degraded soul unworthily admires, so is it her fate to live in the midst of warfare, to be militant here and triumphant only when her children have entered the realms of the blessed, the central home of rest and peace.

To what agency, most reverend and reverend fathers and brethren, has Christ chiefly committed the temporal state and progress of His Church? To the priesthood, beyond all question. His religion is essentially sacerdotal. He Himself is the great high-priest, priest, and victim, who upon the cross redeemed the world, reconciling heaven with earth. Through one man death entered into the world, and through one life returned, and returned with higher promise and divine potency. The solidarity that existed in the primal fault is found also in the redemption; and in this law of solidarity is included the inter-com-

municability of merit and demerit—a truth found in the natural conscience, and which lies at the basis of the whole Christian system. We judge of the race by its highest specimens. By one great man all men are ennobled. The most creative poet can do no more than put into words the common thoughts and hopes and loves of the universal human heart, so that even genius receives what it seems to give. We appropriate the virtues and achievements of our ancestors and national heroes; and if we are fallen they seem to have been dragged down with us. Each one's union with the whole race of men is in proportion to the largeness of his thought and the depth of his love; and a God-Man, dying for men, must have embraced all in His boundless charity, and, founding a religion, He must have meant it for all. From Golgotha's darkened brow a light, never seen before, diffuses itself through the earth, and, like a creeping sunbeam, makes its way from age to age. Not with the sprinkling of the blood of calves and goats, but by the spilling of His own precious blood, the Christ entered into the Holy of Holies, the very heavens, to appear in the presence of God for us. He is the mediator of the New Testament; He is a priest for ever; He hath an everlasting priesthood.

“For it was fitting,” says St. Paul, “that we should have such a high-priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” Christ Jesus is, to use

Tertullian's expression, the Catholic Priest of the Father—"Catholicum Patris Sacerdotem." What an ideal is here! God Himself is become a priest, and the highest man who has appeared on earth, who can ever appear, is a priest. In Israel, indeed, the priesthood was a sublime dignity—"A celestial honor," said Philo, "not an earthly; a heavenly possession." "Honor sacerdotii firmamentum potentiae assumebatur," wrote Tacitus, referring to the wars of the Jews with Antiochus. "Kings were my ancestors," are Agrippa's words to Cæsar, "and some of them were high-priests, which dignity they esteemed more than the purple, believing the priesthood to be higher than royalty, as God is greater than man."

But this was the ministry of prefiguration only, and on the altar of Israel there was but the shadow of God's presence, the symbol and adumbration of what was to be. The divine and the human natures had not yet united to form the perfect priest, the ideal man. In Jesus Christ, the God-Man, the world received, in the fulness of time, the Catholic Priest of the Father—"Catholicum Patris Sacerdotem"—and He has chosen men and set them apart, and associated them with Himself in His everlasting priesthood, that they might continue the work which He came to do. "As the Father hath sent me, so also do I send you." "He that receiveth you receiveth me." "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me." "Whatsoever things I have heard from the

Father I have made known to you." "The glory which Thou hast given to me I have given to them." "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." "Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the end of the world." It is not possible to use language more forcible or more expressive of the ineffable dignity of the priesthood. Every act of the sacerdotal ministry is also an act of Jesus Christ. Who can fathom the depth of this mystery? Who can realize the intimacy of the union of the priest with the Divine Master? "O astounding miracle!" exclaims St. Ephrem, "O ineffable power! O dreadful mystery of the priesthood, venerable and holy, which Christ, coming into this world, has given to the unworthy. On bended knees I pray, with tears and sighs, that we watch over this treasure of the priesthood—treasure, assuredly, for those who sacredly and religiously guard it. For it is, indeed, a resplendent and matchless shield, a strong tower, an inexpugnable bulwark, a solid and fixed foundation to the temple that reaches from earth to heaven; yea, penetrates the very heaven of heavens, and rises with disembodied spirits to the company of angels, and ascends even to the Lord and Creator of angels."*

"The priesthood," says St. Chrysostom, "is an earthly function, but it is classed with heavenly orders, and rightly so. No man, forsooth, nor angel, nor archangel, nor other creature, but the

* *Sermo de Sacerdotio.*

Paraclete Himself instituted this office, and ordained that dwellers in the flesh should take upon themselves the ministry of angels. Therefore it behooves the priest to be as pure as though he already had place among the heavenly powers; . . . for when thou beholdest the Lord immolated lying there, and the priest, bending over the sacrifice, offering prayer, and the people reddened with that precious blood, dost thou imagine thou art still with men and on earth? Art thou not rather translated where, stripped of the senses, thou seest with naked soul and pure mind the things of heaven? O miracle! O benignity of God! He who sits above with the Father is this hour held in the hands of all, offers Himself to be embraced and received." *

"Is it remarkable," asks St. Gregory the Great, "that your piety should honor those whom, in His holy word, the Divine Author of all things pronounces gods?" †

And St. Isidore calls the priesthood "a celestial something and the most excellent of all things—the farthest goal which here below it is possible to reach." ‡

"How great is the prerogative of your order!" exclaims St. Bernard. "God has preferred you to kings and emperors; He has advanced your order above all orders; yea, He has raised you higher than angels and archangels, than thrones and powers; for as He chose not angels but the

* *De Sacerdotio*, lib. iii. cap. iv.

† *Regula Pastoralis*.

‡ Epist. lii.

seed of Abraham to work redemption, so He committed the consecration of the body and blood of the Lord not to angels but to men—to his priests alone.”*

“The priest,” says Peter de Blois, “holds the primacy of Abel, the patriarchate of Abraham, the helm of Noe, the order of Melchisedech, the dignity of Aaron, the authority of Moses, the virtue of Samuel, the poverty of Peter, and the unction of Christ.”†

But what need is there of many citations? Is it not enough to know that the priest is Christ’s vicar, that he is clothed with His authority, that he is charged with the interests of the people for whom He shed His blood, that he speaks in His name, in His name offers prayer and sacrifice, in His name looses or binds the fetters of the soul?

“For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us.” “For we are God’s coadjutors.”

When the Divine Master and Saviour of the world ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, He left on earth a priesthood to continue the work which He had begun. His priest, like Himself, is a pastor, a father, a mediator, a co-worker in the salvation of the world. What he does is not only done by the command of Christ, but with His direct co-operation; since He has not put aside His sacerdotal character, but remains for ever the High-Priest of God.

* *Sermo ad Part. in Synod.*, cap. i.

† *Sermo lx. ad Sacerdot.*

“Not I,” is the word of St. Paul, “but Christ with me.”

The Church, says Bossuet, is “the assembly of God’s children, the army of the Living God, His city, His temple, His throne, His sanctuary, His tabernacle. Let us speak a deeper thing: the Church is Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ spread through the world and communicated to men.” Now, the fathers of God’s children are His priests; they are the leaders of His army, the rulers of His kingdom, the watchmen of His city, the ministers of His temple, the guards of His throne, the servants of His sanctuary, the bearers of His tabernacle, and in their hands Christ is carried through the world and communicated to men. They are the strength of the Church and her glory; and if all men do not submit to her wise and gentle rule it is because so few are found in whom the ideal of a Catholic priest is realized.

“Whence, think you,” asks Massillon, “proceed the license of the age, the decay of morals, the relaxation of discipline, the enfeeblement of faith and piety in the Church? What other origin has all this than the lukewarmness and unfaithfulness of priests? We ourselves are ever the fountain-head of the ignorance and the degradation of God’s law among men. The evils of the Church are nearly always our own crimes.” . . . “Yes, my brothers,” he continues, “unfaithful priests have let loose the winds and tempests of divine wrath which have so often threatened to wreck the bark

of Peter, and which would have overwhelmed it were it possible that the gates of hell should prevail over the promise of Christ, and had not He placed bounds to the angry billows of the sea, beyond which He will never permit them to rage. No, my brothers, the peoples of so many kingdoms who have broken the bonds of unity and become followers after strange doctrines will rise up one day against those unworthy priests who lived at the time of the birth of error among them, and, to their eternal confusion, they will proclaim that the profanation of the altars of religion had alone determined the justice of God to make use of heresy to overturn them and to deliver into the hands of his enemies the temples which the impiety of his ministers had a thousand times desecrated." . . . "The Sacred Scriptures teach us"—I still quote the great Bishop of Clermont—"that the most terrible punishment which God can mete out to states and kingdoms is to raise up in the midst of them bad priests. Not otherwise did he deal with the most grievous excesses of Jerusalem. I will give to you, He says, pastors who will call evil good, and good evil, who will not lift up what is fallen, who will not strengthen what totters, and who will follow after their own desires. This is the last and the greatest of God's scourges. For lesser sins He arms kings against kings, and peoples against peoples; He changes the order of the seasons, visits the land with drought and sterility, and scatters through the earth famine, death, and desolation. But

when His anger is extreme, and all other modes of punishment have been exhausted ; but when He says in His indignation, What chastisement still remains with which I may visit my people, and what supreme mark of my displeasure shall I give to them ?—*Super quo percutiam vos ultra omne caput languidum ?*—ah ! it is then He draws forth from the treasures of His wrath unfaithful priests, worldly and corrupt pastors, whom He sends to be an unspeakable curse to men.”

In these solemn and momentous words of Massillon we hear the voice of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church in every age. The more they have exalted the dignity of the priesthood the more have they cried out, until the very heavens gave back their words, against those by whom this divine office is degraded. The priest stands at the very summit of the whole supernatural system, and if he be ignorant or sensual or venal how shall men recognize in him God’s minister ? “ You are the light of the world,” said the Saviour to His priests. Now, if the world’s light go out in darkness how shall men see Christ ? How shall they know the truth of His religion ? “ You are the salt of the earth,” He said. Now, if the salt lose its flavor how shall men be able to taste the heavenly and ineffable sweetness that is in the life of Christ ? How shall they learn that to know Him is to have everlasting life ?

But, most reverend and reverend fathers and brethren, though it is inevitable that abuses should creep in and scandals break forth even in the sanc-

tuary during the long course of ages, in which the Church has been exposed to every vicissitude of fortune—now suffering persecution, now living in the midst of barbarous hordes, now torn by social cataclysms or rent by heresy and schism, and again lifted up into high places above the heads of kings, with the riches and honors of the world heaped upon her—yet will I say without fear that there is no other body of men known to history who have led so high and worthy a life or exerted so beneficent an influence upon the course of human affairs as the Catholic priesthood. To its action we owe whatever benefits the Christian religion has conferred upon mankind. Priests have been, in very deed, the light of the world and the salt of the earth. They have evangelized the nations and given laws to barbarians and savages. They have built schools, and founded universities, and preserved the literatures of effete civilizations. They have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and sheltered the homeless. They have taught kings, and withstood tyrants, and created parliaments. They have freed the slave, and ennobled woman, and watched over the sanctities of the family. They have believed in God, and in the soul, and in an order of things that is eternal. They have pointed ever to the absolute good, the absolute right, in the midst of a world eager to make compromise between justice and policy. To them belongs “the marvellous ascendancy,” to quote De Maistre, “which stopped Theodosius at the door of the cathedral of Milan, Attila on the road to

Rome, and Louis XIV. at the altar-rail. To them belongs the power, still more wonderful, which can touch the hardened heart and restore it to life; which enters palaces to take the gold of heartless or careless opulence and pour it into the lap of poverty; which dares all, overcomes all, where there is a soul to comfort, to enlighten, or to save; which sweetly winds itself into consciences to detect there fatal secrets or to tear out the roots of vice. They are the organ and the tireless guardian of holy unions; the enemy not less active of all license; gentle without weakness; terrible and yet loving; the priceless supplement of reason, of probity, of honor, of all the faculties of man at the moment when they proclaim their impotence; precious and inexhaustible source of reconciliation, of reparation, of restitution, of efficacious repentance, of all that God most loves next to innocence—this supernatural power stands by the cradle to bless it, and at the bedside of the dying it speaks to the Christian soul the final word of hope and courage.” Behold the countless institutions of charity and mercy with which the Catholic Church has covered the face of the earth. Who is there that does not recognize that human nature is honored and ennobled by those numberless bands of heroic women who in every land are as God’s angels to the orphan, the sick, and the outcast; whose home is in asylums and hospitals, and in the crowded city where pestilence and contagion mark the victims of death? But what power

has organized these works, has founded these sisterhoods and gathered into them pure and devoted souls? The Catholic priesthood. Vincent de Paul, or Francis de Sales, or some other saintly priest of the Church is found watching by the cradle of each and all of these religious congregations; and if the sacerdotal ministry of holy counsel and the sacraments were withdrawn these communities would inevitably cease to exist. They flourish nowhere but in the Catholic Church, because nowhere else is there a real and authentic priesthood. Priests, indeed, are men; they are born sinners; they do not descend from the heavens; there is no human infirmity to which they are not subject; and to pretend that, out of the multitudes who during the long course of centuries have stood at the altar, none have been unworthy and corrupt would be to make one's self guilty of downright absurdity. This would not be the world which we all know it to be, and human nature would be something wholly different from the feeble and contradictory compound revealed to us in consciousness, were it possible to bring about perfect correspondence between the ideal and the real in large bodies of men and during a succession of ages. But the sins of the priest are no more an argument against the Church than the sins of the Christian are an argument against Christ, or the sins of man an argument against God. With all my heart I re-echo the words of Moehler. "Examples enough," he says, "can be found of priests, bishops, and popes who have

failed to discharge their duty when it was in their power to bring about a reform of morals, or who, by their own scandalous lives, have extinguished the still glimmering torch which they ought to have kindled. Hell hath swallowed them up. Avowals of this kind Catholics must not shrink from, and never have shrunk from, making. The attempt, indeed, were idle; for Protestants themselves furnish an irrefragable proof of the state of manifold neglect into which the people had fallen during the fifteenth century. Never could a system of doctrine like theirs have sprung up, still less have prevailed so widely, had individual teachers and priests been faithful to the duties of their calling. Truly, the ignorance could not have been slight on which a system of faith like that of the Reformers was imposed as worthy of acceptance; and thus Protestants may learn to estimate the greatness of the evils which then oppressed the Church by the grievousness of the errors into which they themselves have fallen. This is the point at which Catholics and Protestants will, in great multitudes, one day meet and stretch a friendly hand one to the other. Both, conscious of guilt, must exclaim: 'We all have erred; it is the Church only which cannot err. We all have sinned; the Church only is spotless on earth.'

It is abundantly evident, most reverend and reverend fathers and brethren, that the progress or decay of the faith in the world depends upon the character of the priesthood. The promise of Christ is indeed our warrant that His religion can never

wholly cease to be ; but for the rest He has delivered the fate of His Church into the hands of His priests. Sacerdotalism is a distinctive mark of true Christianity. To priests the Saviour committed the preaching of the Gospel ; to them He entrusted the administration of the sacraments ; to them He gave authority to govern and to rule in His Church ; and in this way has He given historic continuance to His threefold office of prophet, of priest, and of king. The great mission of the priesthood is to preach the Gospel with knowledge and power, to administer the sacraments with holiness and zeal, and to govern the Church with wisdom and strength. We demand of the priest that he be holy, of the teacher that he be learned, of the ruler that he be wise and strong,

“ And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly and meek as womanhood.”

How, then, shall we form the man who is to be at once a priest, a teacher, and a ruler?

If a right education, together with religion, is the chief and highest instrument for the reformation and elevation of mankind, that, surely, by which the minister of Christ is to be trained and fashioned is most deserving of our attention and meditation. When, in the sixteenth century, every kind of evil seemed at once to break in upon the Church, and with such violence that, except to the eye of faith, her day of doom appeared to be near, the best and the wisest declared that there was no hope of re-establishing order, unless a purer and higher ec-

clesiastical education was introduced. This was the leading thought of St. Ignatius, the man of Providence for that age; and hence the great Society which he founded, and which became the bulwark of the Church, not only took the form of an educational body, but was created, I may say, by a return to the profound views of St. Augustine, the originator of the ecclesiastical seminary, upon the education of the priesthood. St. Ignatius drew up a plan for the organization of seminaries and colleges, which, as Germany was the seat of the trouble, it was his intention to put to a practical test first in that country. He was the founder of the German College at Rome, which has done such noble work, and which besides served as a model to the Fathers of the Council of Trent in their well-known decree concerning seminaries. When Cardinal Moronus, who was in sympathy with the ideas of St. Ignatius, sought to interest Pope Julius III. in the German College, the pontiff at once promised to devote to its support half of the income of his private fortune, and in the consistory in which he recommended the enterprise to the cardinals he openly declared that the real cause of the troubles which had destroyed the peace both of the Church and the empire was to be found in the relaxation of discipline and morals among the clergy, the inevitable results of their shameful ignorance; and he went on to show that, in order to remedy the evil which was laying waste Germany, it was necessary to begin by reorganizing ecclesiastical education.

This idea occupies the thoughts of the most zealous and enlightened churchmen of that age. When Cardinal Pole drew up a project for the reformation of the Church in England, the establishment of ecclesiastical seminaries according to the plan of St. Ignatius was prominent among the measures which he recommended. To promote a higher and purer education of the priesthood was the life-work of St. Charles Borromeo, and his example created a healthy reaction throughout Italy. Many bishops in France, Spain, and Germany who had taken part in the Council of Trent returned to their dioceses with an eager desire to carry out its decrees concerning the education of priests. The great popes of the sixteenth century, especially Paul IV., St. Pius V., and Gregory XIII., exerted their powerful influence to help on this work, which they deemed of more importance to the welfare of the Church than all others. Colleges were founded among the various Catholic nations to supply with priests England and Ireland and the other countries in which seminaries could not be opened. Nor did the good work slacken with the passing away of the century in which it had originated. It was continued and carried to greater perfection in the seventeenth century by St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis de Sales, and M. Olier; and the fruit of their efforts was visible not only in the general reformation of morals, but more strikingly still in the high and enduring intellectual achievements of Bossuet, Massillon, Fénelon, Flé-

chier, and other great names who in that age lent the strength and splendor of their genius to the defence and illustration of the doctrines of the Church.

At no epoch of Christian history do we find worthier examples or more eloquent arguments to stimulate priests to a love of the highest and deepest culture. What could be more persuasive or convincing than Massillon's synodal discourse on the study and knowledge required in the minister of religion?

"I declare with all emphasis," says St. Francis de Sales, "that ignorance in a priest is more to be dreaded than sin, because it does not merely lead to his own ruin, but dishonors and degrades the sacerdotal character. I implore you, therefore, my very dear brothers, to give yourselves up to serious study. For the priest knowledge is the eighth sacrament, and the greatest misfortunes have come upon the Church whenever the ark of science has been permitted to fall from the hands of the Levites. Why has Geneva been able to make such terrible ravages among us? Because we have been idle, contenting ourselves with saying our breviary, and having no real love of study. Our opponents have taken advantage of our negligence to persuade men that hitherto the Sacred Scriptures have not been rightly understood; and thus, while we were asleep, an enemy hath set fire to the house, and we should all have been consumed had not Divine Providence raised up the fathers of the Society of Jesus—those powerful minds, those

great men, whose courage is intrepid, whose zeal is tireless, whose knowledge is profound; who not only lead holy and blameless lives, but who devour books with ceaseless study, and who, in spite of calumny, insult, and outrage, have re-established the true faith, and even yet fill the world with learned and able men who are sapping on every side the foundations of heresy."

The shield and sword of the priest, most reverend and reverend fathers and brethren, are holiness of life and knowledge. This is St. Paul's teaching: "Attende tibi et doctrinæ: insta in illis. Hoc enim faciens, et te ipsum salvum facies, et eos qui te audiunt."

That the priest should be innocent, undefiled, holy, "the perfect man of God, disciplined to all good works," "having faith and a pure conscience," is self-evident. If God is holy His priest must be holy. If he that is defiled cannot enter heaven, neither should he be permitted to stand at the altar whereon Christ is present. "What concord hath Christ with Belial?"

If sin is the universal negative of Christianity, a sinful priest is Antichrist. And since man's life is more than his knowledge, and character is better than culture, and to be holy is more desirable in every way than to be learned, if it were possible that we should be compelled to choose between a virtuous but ignorant priesthood and a priesthood which with high mental cultivation would lack righteousness and the spiritual mind, the choice ought not to be difficult.

But, in point of fact, this dilemma can never be anything else than a mere hypothesis. A virtuous priesthood cannot remain ignorant, and an ignorant priesthood cannot remain virtuous. "Without knowledge," says St. Augustine, the profoundest of Christian doctors, "it is not possible to have the virtues which make life holy." And this may, indeed, be said to be but the expression of the mind of the Church on this subject. Her aim has been and is to create a priesthood which to the highest culture of mind will unite the most perfect discipline of life; and to realize this ideal she labors day by day, and, if we consider the whole course of her existence, with success. The new impulse given to education by the Council of Trent has produced admirable results. The experience of three centuries now has shown how efficaciously ecclesiastical seminaries, when rightly constituted and governed, perform the work for which they were founded; and the bishops of the United States, studious of whatever may promote and defend the interests of religion, have manifested from the earliest days of the establishment of the hierarchy in this country the most laudable zeal for the education of the priesthood. The see of Baltimore had hardly been erected when Bishop Carroll took steps to open in his episcopal city the seminary in which so many zealous and efficient bishops and priests have been educated, and which still continues to be a fountain of grace to the American Church. It would be tedious even to refer

to all the institutions of this kind which have since been founded in various parts of the United States. The history of their rise and progress is not unknown to you, nor is it necessary that any one should tell you how intimately their work is associated with the general growth and prosperity of the Church in this country. Our theological seminaries are at present, if I may express an opinion, not in any essential point inferior to those of Europe, and the worthy and enlightened men who control them manifest an earnest desire to reach yet higher standards of excellence.

You will not, therefore, most reverend and reverend fathers and brethren, misunderstand me when I affirm that it is not possible that seminaries such as these are and must remain, here and elsewhere, should give the highest intellectual education. They are elementary schools of theology, and to deprive them of this character would not only be a departure from the end for which they were instituted, but would render them useless. They prepare priests for the ordinary work of the ministry, and hence their plan of studies and method of teaching are adapted to the common order of talent. They give the education which the common run of students are capable of receiving. They are founded to supply a general want, and if exceptional culture in special subjects is desirable some other means of imparting it than the elementary school of theology must be chosen.

We may look to our ecclesiastical seminaries to send us faithful and religious priests, who will have also a sufficient theological knowledge to enable them to perform the ordinary duties of the ministry in a satisfactory manner. For more than this we must not look, unless we think it worth while to cherish delusions. If here and there a pupil of these institutions is found who with great learning possesses the best intellectual culture, this will be due to his exceptional force of mind and character, and not to the school; and where the elementary seminary is not supplemented by a college of higher grade and wider range such priests will be extremely rare.

Now, since a worthy priesthood cannot be formed without education, it follows with the evidence of an axiom that the priest ought to receive the best possible education. Some of the Protestant sects have been guilty of the folly of holding that to the preacher of the Gospel learning is an impediment; but the Catholic Church, whose action is always marked by good sense and the recognition of facts, has never been led to put an absurd interpretation upon the *dabitur vobis*. It has been her constant teaching that the lips of the priest should be the guardian of wisdom, that he should grow not only in grace but also in the knowledge of the Lord, that he should feed his flock with learning and truth, and that when he repels science he himself should be repulsed from the sacred functions of the minis-

try. If my position is secure, that the elementary seminary cannot, under any circumstances, give the best intellectual culture, and that this best education is nevertheless indispensable in a considerable number of priests in each country, the question at once suggests itself: Have we here in the United States an institution competent to do this all-important work? I answer without hesitation that we have not such an institution. We have elementary schools of theology only; and in this category I place the American colleges at Rome and Louvain. They are elementary seminaries, and nothing more. Permit me here to qualify this unconditional statement by bearing testimony to the earnest and praiseworthy efforts of the Jesuits to create at Woodstock a higher school of philosophy and theology for the members of their own order. They have put us all under obligations by this good example, which is at the same time a public confession of the pressing need of more thorough training and wider culture in the priesthood. But this is the special work of a particular order, and the secular priests of this country are not and cannot be brought under its influence; and my assertion, therefore, remains unshaken, that for choice men in the secular priesthood we have no institution in which they may receive the best intellectual culture. They are all, whatever their talents may be, thrown into the active duties of the ministry at the end of a three or four years' course of philosophy and theology, during which

everything has made it impossible that they should get more than a general knowledge of the rudiments and technicalities of the highest and most difficult of all sciences. Now, is it not manifest that it is most desirable that the brightest minds and the healthiest characters among the young theologians who each year are ordained from our seminaries should be directed, not at once to the distracting labors of the ministry, but to some one institution in which a few men of profound thought, of deep research, and of liberal cultivation of mind might lift them up to higher and wider views of all things, and at the same time awaken in them a deeper passion for knowledge and a loftier conception of the divine work which the priest is appointed to do? I am not speaking of a university, but of something far simpler, less expensive, and, in my opinion, better fitted to supply the most pressing want of American Catholics. The institution of which I am thinking might be called a High-School of Philosophy and Theology. To it would be sent the best students, who in other respects should be found worthy, at the end of their seminary course, and they would be expected to remain in the college of philosophical and theological culture from two to six years. One such institution would be sufficient for the whole country, and its location would be a point of indifference. Some secluded spot, hallowed by memories of true men who have departed, like the Old Mountain near Emmitsburg, would be more favorable to high thinking and un-

disturbed meditation than the suburbs of a great city. But the mind which dwells in a world of its own may be calm and thoughtful anywhere, and hence, I say, the choice of a site need offer no difficulty. It is not easy to get the best men for many institutions, and when they are found the history of this Seminary of Milwaukee shows how quickly they are called away into wider spheres; but for a single college in which the whole Catholic Church of the United States should be intimately interested it would, without doubt, be possible to find five or six men of real learning and of the highest cultivation of mind who would also possess the enthusiasm of their sublime mission; and as this would be the post of honor in our whole Church, an able professor would not be removed to some vacant see, unless an abler had been found to take his place. Here, then, we should throw together under the most favorable circumstances true masters and forty or fifty of the most gifted young priests of the United States. This contact alone would create a new race of men. The quick mind quickens its fellows, and the friction of thought in a company of eager and intelligent students would little by little communicate to the intellect a force, a candor, a comprehensiveness, an accuracy and sobriety, which, taken together, constitute its perfection and fit it to do its highest work. It would not be the aim of such a college to make profound theologians, or learned exegetes, or skilful metaphysicians, or specialists of whatever kind, though

doubtless many of its pupils would distinguish themselves in the various branches of knowledge. It would teach theology, not, like the elementary seminary, with a view to practice, whether in the pulpit or the confessional, but it would consider it as a subject of contemplation. It would seek to impart not professional skill but cultivation of mind. It would hold that knowledge and education are distinct ideas, and it would strive to strengthen and refine the intellect rather than to store the memory.

“To open the mind,” to use Cardinal Newman’s words, “to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its own knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression,” would be the object of the college of which I am thinking. It would not, indeed, pursue this object to the exclusion of other things, but its existence would be due to the need of such cultivation of mind as is here indicated. Since in setting forth, explaining, and defending the history and doctrines of the Church the intellect is the instrument of which we make use, it is important that this instrument should be brought to the highest possible effectiveness. And since this culture of mind, in our day especially, is an insidious and dangerous foe of religion, it is our urgent duty to form men who will be able to make it also its serviceable ally. And if you say that we have such intellects, I reply that in those

parts of the world in which the English language prevails Catholics of the best cultivation of mind are rare, and the chief among them received their intellectual training before they entered the Church. It is very easy to account for this fact, but the fact remains, and the loss which results is incalculably great. To me, so long as no step is taken to give to the Church in the United States men of the best cultivation of mind, each year seems a decade, and each decade a century. It is sad to see the harvest ripen when there are no hands to reap and garner it. And to those who say to me that the time has not come, that it is not possible now to found a high-school of philosophy and theology such as is here contemplated, I make answer that it is possible to try. There are things which ought to be done, and if men succeed in doing them it is their highest honor and reward ; and if they fail, having tried with honest purpose and persevering effort, they are not less worthy of homage and applause. Ambitious men may fear failure, but good men need not be subject to this weakness. Why should not a project such as that of which I speak be feasible? Five hundred thousand dollars would be sufficient to secure the buildings and endow chairs enough, at least for a beginning. This is a paltry sum in a country in which a single individual will not unfrequently give a million or several million dollars to establish a centre of education. I make no doubt that if an appeal were made to the six thousand priests now labor-

ing on the missions in the United States the good of religion and the honor of their order would, in spite of their poverty, suggest to them a way to raise the necessary funds. As to the faculty, four or five professors would enable us to make a beginning; and if all of them cannot be found in America, Europe is open to us, and the causes which have sent the most learned Jesuits to Woodstock would incline other European scholars to offer us their services. Many of the older dioceses have priests enough, and could without inconvenience permit a certain number of their choice subjects to continue their studies for a longer period; and even in dioceses where this would not be easy it would still be wise, at whatever cost, to secure the best education for at least a few of the priests. It may be thought that young men who have finished their seminary course will be anxious to get to work and will hardly consent to a more thorough and protracted course of study. There will be enough, surely, of whom this will not be true; and if among the best class of students there be found some who, when selected for the school of profound studies, demur upon the plea that they know enough, this would be decisive. There is no hope for a man who knows enough. But a few great names in our college of higher studies would make it a centre of attraction and create among the students of the seminaries a spirit of emulation which would fill them with an eager desire to represent their class in the great philosophical and theological school

of the country. The best young men are naturally disciples and hero-worshippers, and they instinctively long to be thrown into intimate and living contact with some high and noble mind. They feel, even though they do not know, that the best educator is a great character, and that only great men can teach men how to be great. For my own part, I must think that to have lived a year with St. Augustine would be worth more than to have read all the text-books of theology.

And now, most reverend and reverend fathers and brethren, some apology is due from me for the trial to which I have put your patience by this long discourse, and not less for having presumed to take up in your presence a theme to the discussion of which others would have brought minds better trained and characters of greater weight. I can only put forward the feeble plea of an honest purpose, or, it may be, fall back upon the thought that, when the good and wise are silent, even an idle voice may serve to start the flow of reason. I have faith, at least, that in God's providence a sublime destiny awaits this New World, and consequently the Church of Jesus Christ in America. Not the most visionary dreamer, as I believe, even suspects to what an extent the fate of the whole human race is bound up with the work which we here in America are doing, and it is not possible, therefore, to take too high a view of the responsibility which rests upon the American priesthood. Here is the most

active and progressive people in the wide world, and they are eager to listen to whoever brings cultivated thought and eloquent expression to the advocacy of religious truth ; and if we had a considerable number of bishops and priests with the best intellectual training, the Catholic presentation of Christianity, which is the only founded and accordant system of supernatural belief, would little by little grow upon the public mind and so work its way into the hearts of multitudes. If ever and anywhere one might, with St. Paul, wish to be anathema, if only his brethren might be saved, it is doubtless here and now.

V I.

THE PRIMACY AND INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

MY dear friends and brethren, in my discourse to-night I propose, as you know, to consider certain objections to the Catholic Church recently made here in Bloomington by the Right Rev. Bishop Seymour; and, before entering upon the discussion, I wish to give expression to my hearty sympathy with what I may call the tone and spirit of the bishop's lecture. He has spoken calmly, with dignity, and without appeal to unworthy passions. Whatever is done in the name of religion should be done in a religious temper, and it is my earnest desire that a reverent and Christian spirit shall mark whatever I may say to-night. It is pleasant also at the outset to be able to direct your attention to important points upon which I am in accord with Bishop Seymour's views. I hold, with him, that the Christian Church is a divine institution, and not of man's making; that it was established and exists as a separate organization, with a constitution and history of its own; that it was founded before any part of the New Testament had been written; that these Sacred Scriptures were written by men who had already accepted the Chris-

tian revelation, and consequently grew out of the Church, and not the Church out of them ; and that the Church is the divinely-appointed guardian and interpreter of the Scriptures as of the whole body of revealed truth ; and, finally, that among the reasons for which the Church was founded is this : " That she might receive the revelation ; that she might hold it fast ; that she might guard it ; that she might instruct men as to what it means ; that she might not go wrong and lead men to their own ruin."

Had I controversy with an atheist or a pantheist I should seek to prove theism ; if with a deist, I should aim to establish the divine mission of Christ ; if with an evangelical Protestant, I should advance reasons to show that the Bible without an authoritative interpreter cannot serve as a rule of faith ; but since upon all these issues Bishop Seymour and myself occupy common ground, it would seem inevitable that any serious religious discussion between us should turn upon the constitution of the Church. The Christian Church, as I apprehend the subject, is the organ and representative of Christ, who is the Son of God and one with the Father. It is the embodiment and continuation of His life and work. It is the permanent organization of His religion, which is thus made capable of historic continuity and growth. It is visible, as His life was visible ; it is a society because it is destined to endure and to grow ; and in this world nothing attains to greatness except in society. The Church is Christ's permanent in-

carnation in the world ; it is His kingdom, founded upon the apostles, constituted for all ages and for all men in the unity of faith, hope, and charity, and enriched with the sacraments. He entrusted the apostolic body with the power which the Father had given Him, and He commissioned them to minister and teach in His name, with the promise that He would abide with them, as a corporate entity, until the end of time, and that He would also send the Holy Ghost to be the ever-present and enduring life and support of this His mystical body. This Church is one, catholic, holy, and apostolic. Christ established but one religious society, and this note of unity is impressed upon its organization, its government, its teaching, and its worship. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." The catholicity of the Church consists in its mission to all men, in the inculcation of all Christian doctrine and law, in its existence in all ages from its foundation to the latest moment that emerges from eternity. The catholicity of the Church is the expansion of its unity, by which the one faith with the one form of worship and ecclesiastical government is brought within the reach of all men, without distinction of race or nationality, of time or place. The realization of this idea can never be perfect, and hence there is an essential distinction between the principle and the fact of catholicity. The Church is apostolic, inasmuch as it rests upon the apostles as the foundation laid by Christ, and derives its mission, its doctrine, and its orders from the Saviour through

them. The evidence of this derivation is the historic identity of the Church in any given age with that of the apostles as traced in episcopal succession, and chiefly in the see of Rome, whose line of pontiffs stretches back in unbroken order to Peter, upon whom, in an especial manner, Christ founded the Church, and to whom he committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the care and nurture of his flock. The holiness of the Church is derived from its founder, Christ; from the end of its institution, the sanctification of men; and from the means to this end with which it has been endowed—truth and grace, which it receives unfailingly from the Holy Ghost. It is thus not only holy, but, as the guardian of the doctrine, the spirit, the personal presence even of Christ, it has the power to regenerate and sanctify; and hence its holiness is revealed in the pure and spotless lives of innumerable thousands of its members; and though many of those who belong to the body of the Church are sinful, its sanctity does not suffer hurt, since their conduct is in open violation of its spirit and precepts. The idea of the Church, as described in these notes, is that of Christianity itself. True Christianity is found in the Church, and not elsewhere. Without the Church it would be an abstraction, a tendency, or at best a philosophy. The Church is the concrete manifestation of Christianity, just as the idea of humanity is realized only in individual men. As an independent and sovereign society the Church has a constitution and government of its own, which

it holds directly from its founder, Christ ; and since a hierarchic principle underlies all social life, it must be found here also. Hence arises the distinction between clergy and laity, between bishop and priest, between pope and bishop. The apostles are the pillars of the Church, but Peter is the corner-stone upon which Christ reared the heavenly temple. He gave to him the primacy as priest, as teacher, and as ruler of the Church ; and this authority like that of the apostolate, descends in its plenitude to his successors, and is thus transmitted from age to age. The see of Peter is the centre of Catholic unity ; it is the bond which unites hearts through charity, and minds through faith, and thus unifies both the government and the doctrine of the Church. The official infallibility of the pope is implied in the exalted function assigned to him by Christ. His error when speaking as the head of the universal Church would be a universal error, through which all the faithful would be led astray, and so the promise of the God-Man that the gates of hell should not prevail against His Church, that He would abide with it for ever, and that the Holy Ghost should lead it into all truth, would be made null and void. But this would be the negation of Christianity ; and hence the infallibility of the pope, explicitly defined in the Vatican Council, is but the development of the general idea of the Church as held by Catholics from the beginning. Now, the objection which Bishop Seymour makes to the Catholic

Church, as thus constituted, is that such a religion is not catholic but local—a mere reproduction of Judaism.

“It is,” he says, “a contradiction of catholicity. It is a return to Judaism. It revolutionizes the idea of the Catholic Church as given us in ecclesiastical history and as given us in the Bible.” This objection is, as I take it, the head and front of his whole indictment; and it may be well, therefore, to consider it from various points of view. To begin, I lay it down as an evident truth that a visible body needs a visible head. This is true not only of every natural body but also of bodies politic, social, commercial, or of whatever kind. Least of all the members of the body should the head be hidden in the clouds. Its office is the highest, the most indispensable, and there should be open and unmistakable channels of communication between it and all the members. Bishop Seymour maintains that the Church is a visible historic society, and yet he insists that it has no head but one hidden behind the clouds. To a confessedly visible body he is willing to concede only an unseen head. This, as I look at the subject, is to degrade the Church to a monstrous creation, is to make of it an anomaly, a flagrant violation of all the laws by which organized beings are governed. Now, the visible head of a body, such as a church or an empire, has necessarily a local habitation; and whether this be Rome, or London, or Berlin, or some other place, it leaves wholly untouched the

question as to whether the body which it directs is narrow and national or wide-spread and universal. Hence there is no relevancy whatever in an objection to the catholicity of the Church drawn from the fact that the pope lives in Rome. It is equivalent to maintaining that it is simply impossible that the Catholic Church should have a visible head, which, I imagine, neither Bishop Seymour nor other reasonable man is prepared to affirm. The assertion that the Church, with the visible head at Rome, is only a reproduction of Judaism is so unfounded as to be almost incredible when made by a man of Bishop Seymour's character and learning. Judaism was essentially a national religion. It was the religion of the Jew, and not of the gentile. Now, the Roman Catholic religion is, of all religions that have ever existed among men, the least national; and this patent fact has been used as an argument against us again and again, and from century to century. Anglicanism is more or less a national religion, but the religion whose highest visible representative is the pope of Rome is primarily and essentially non-national. It has followers amongst all peoples; it sends its missionaries to the ends of the earth and knows no distinction of race or color. It is surrounded by all the varying forms of civil and social life. It dwells in the tents of barbarians and in the wigwams of savages. It can live in the mines of Siberia and on the prairies of Illinois. Roman Catholics are American, English, Irish, Scotch,

German, French, Italian, Spanish, Canadian, African, Indian, or what you please, and their devotion to their religion leaves intact their peculiar national traits of character.

Another objection to the doctrine of papal supremacy Bishop Seymour draws from its supposed inconsistency with the teachings of Holy Scripture. He admits, however, the primacy of Peter. "That he enjoyed," he says, "a primacy among the apostles is clear. He was *primus inter pares*, no doubt; but a primacy is fundamentally different from a supremacy." I will allude briefly to Scriptural texts relating to the subject in hand. There is, first, the well-known passage (Matt. xvi. 15-19) in which Christ, singling Peter out from among the apostles, addressed him in the following words: "And I say to thee: That thou art Peter [Cephas], and upon this rock [Cephas] I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

At the Last Supper Jesus said to Peter (Luke xxii. 31, 32): "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." After His resurrection the Saviour addressed Himself to Peter for the third time and committed to him most solemnly and

with threefold repetition the care of His flock—that is, of His Church (John xxi. 15-17). To enter into a critical examination of these texts would require an entire discourse, and is, besides, unnecessary. Their plain and obvious meaning is that which the Catholic Church attaches to them, and to seek to put any other construction upon them is to explain them away. When once we have accepted the obvious meaning of these texts many things in the Gospel become clear to us; as, for instance, why Christ changed Peter's name, and his alone, into "the rock"; why the evangelists, in speaking of the apostles, mention Peter by name, while they refer to the others *in globo*: "Simon, and they that were with him"; "They said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles." Peter's office explains why he is the only apostle put in this relation to the rest; why he is the first to address the Jews in Jerusalem or to make converts from the gentiles; why it is he who points out to the apostles the necessity of choosing a successor to Judas; why in the apostolic Council of Jerusalem his sentiments are recorded first; why his name always stands first in the lists of the apostles, and why he is called by St. Matthew the first apostle. We readily perceive, therefore, why Bishop Seymour felt it necessary to admit the primacy of Peter; and the same considerations which force us to hold that the general powers of the apostles descend to their successors demand that we acknowledge that Peter's primacy descends

to his successors. But Bishop Seymour seeks to save himself by distinguishing between primacy and supremacy. The headship of Peter in the apostolic college, he would have us believe, was one of honor merely, and not of jurisdiction.

Bishop Seymour attempts to defend a view which many years ago was put forward by Thomas William Allies in a book entitled *The Church of England cleared from the Charge of Schism*, who, however, was so little satisfied with the tenability of this position that he afterward abandoned Episcopalianism and entered the Catholic Church. He is the author of a work which I earnestly commend to the attention of all who are interested in the present controversy. The title of the book to which I refer is *The See of St. Peter—The Rock of the Church, the Source of Jurisdiction, and the Centre of Unity*. “The conclusions to which I came,” he says in the preface to the third edition, “as the result of five years’ study and prayer, were so powerful as to force me to give up my living—to leave the communion in which I had been born and bred, and in which all my hopes of prosperity in this world lay—to become a layman in the Catholic Church, and in middle years to begin life anew.”

But since Bishop Seymour insists that the doctrine of the supremacy of the pope, as distinguished from an honorary primacy, was unknown to the early Church, and does not date farther back than six or, at most, eight centuries, it becomes necessary to show how inaccurate this assertion

is ; though I must content myself with a few passages taken here and there from the early Christian writers. St. Chrysostom, the great Bishop of Constantinople, who was born in 344, often refers to Peter's office. "Christ," he says, "placed Peter over the entire world. He is the basis of the Church, the key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven ; he was the chief, who occupied the first place ; he was the pillar of the Church, the basis of the faith, the head of the apostolic choir. To him the Lord gave the presidency of the Church throughout the whole earth." St. Ambrose, born in 340, says : " Where Peter is, there is the Church." He thus makes communion with the see of Peter the test of Catholic orthodoxy. St. Jerome, the contemporary of St. Ambrose, says : " One is chosen among the twelve, that, a head being established, the occasion of schism may be removed." Here the headship of Peter is declared to be the bond of unity, and this, of course, implies real, not nominal, authority. St. Augustine says : " Peter represented the very universality and unity of the Church." It is through Peter's office that visible unity and catholicity of the Church are made possible. St. Cyprian calls Peter "the source of unity" ; and the source of unity is what makes catholicity possible. Theodoret calls the see of Peter "that most holy throne which has the headship over all the churches of the world." Pope Leo the Great, who lived fifteen hundred years ago, speaks the mind of the Church on Peter's office in the following words : " And yet out of the

whole world Peter alone is chosen to preside over the calling of all the gentiles, and over all the apostles and collected Fathers of the Church ; so that though there be among the people of God many priests and many shepherds, yet Peter rules all by immediate commission, whom Christ also rules by sovereign power.” St. Leo also declares the authority of Peter in the Church to be co-extensive with that of Christ. He introduces the Saviour as addressing Peter in the following language: “For thou art Peter; that is, whilst I am the immutable rock, I the corner-stone, who make both one, I the foundation beside which no one can lay another, yet thou also art a rock, because by my virtue thou art firmly planted, so that whatever is peculiar to me by power is to thee, by participation, common with me.” Pope Boniface I. (A.D. 422) says: “The formation of the universal Church at its birth took its beginning from the honor of Blessed Peter, in whose person its regimen and sum consists. For from his fountain the stream of ecclesiastical discipline flowed forth into all churches as the culture of religion progressively advanced. Certain, therefore, is it that this Church is to the churches diffused throughout the whole world, as it were, the head of its own members, from which whosoever cuts himself off becomes expelled from the Christian religion, as he has begun not to be in the one compact structure.”

I shall conclude these citations with the words of St. Maximus, an Eastern abbot and martyr.

He is speaking of Pyrrhus, patriarch of Constantinople, and a monothelite. If he would not be or be considered a heretic, he says, “let him before all seek to satisfy the Roman see. That done, all will everywhere, with one accord, hold him pious and orthodox. For he merely talks idly when he thinks of persuading and imposing on such like as me, and does not satisfy and implore the most blessed pope of the most holy Roman Church, that is, the Apostolic See, which from the very Incarnate Word of God, but also from all holy councils, according to the sacred canons and rules, has received and holds in all persons and for all things empire, authority, and power to bind and loose over the universal holy churches of God which are in all the world. For when this binds and looses, so also does the Word in heaven, who rules the celestial virtues.” It is plain from these passages—and volumes of similar testimonies might be collected—that the nature of the supremacy which they set forth is a charge of the whole flock of Christ, of the Church Catholic. And this charge necessarily includes guardianship of the faith, and therefore the final and supreme judgment in causes touching it, and consequently the gift of not being deceived in such judgment, which is infallibility. Nearly all the testimonies of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers to the primacy and supremacy of the pope are grounded on one or other or all the sayings of our Lord to Peter, thus clearly indicating the sense which the Christian world from

the beginning attached to these utterances. It will not be difficult now to set a right value upon the reasons which Bishop Seymour assigns in order to explain the vast and determining influence of the popes in the history of the Christian world. Even had these causes been more potent than they are held to have been they would prove nothing whatever against the primacy and supremacy of the successors of Peter, as instituted by Christ and witnessed to by the Church from the earliest ages. In the first place, Bishop Seymour thinks the city of Rome itself had much to do with giving to the pope his historic position in Christendom. Rome, he says, was to ancient civilization what no other city ever has been, or ever can be, to any other civilization. "She was the first in every element of greatness. Now this influence is divided among a great many cities." This is evidently an exaggeration, not to say a perversion, of the facts of history. The ancient world had at least two other capitals whose influence has been as great as that of Rome. Athens was first in philosophy, in poetry, in eloquence, in art. She was the world's university; Rome was but her pupil. Jerusalem was the earth's religious capital. Still, it was no doubt in accordance with the designs of God's special providence that the visible head of the Church was placed in Rome, and not in Athens or Jerusalem. The Roman was the representative of law, of order, of stability, and the art of government was with him an instinct. His city, as the military and com-

mercial capital of the world, offered special facilities for the exercise of an office like that which Christ had given Peter. Hence he placed his chair on the steps of the throne on which sat the masters of the world. And in doing so he took his life in his hand ; and of his thirty immediate successors, twenty-six suffered martyrdom. A record like this could not be without its weight. But there is no connection between living in a great city and dying for a great cause, and being acknowledged head of the universal Church. Had not Christ made Peter the prince of the apostles his residence in Rome would not have caused him to be considered the source of jurisdiction and the bond of unity. Rome, in fact, did less for the popes than the popes for Rome. Had it not been for them there is no good reason for thinking that the Eternal City to-day would be more important than Athens or Jerusalem.

A second cause which, in Bishop Seymour's opinion, gave rise to the papal power is the fact that during the second epoch of Christian history —the epoch of the great heresies of Arius, Nestorius, and Eutyches—the popes saved the Church. That they did so is certain, but that they were able to do so is attributable to the fact that their divine office as supreme visible head of the Church was acknowledged by bishops and councils. Their saving the Church did not make them popes, but they were able to save the Church because they were popes.

Another cause he finds in the destruction of the

patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria by the Mohammedan power. But the supremacy of the pope was acknowledged when these sees were at the height of their influence.

A fourth cause, Bishop Seymour thinks, is the historical fact that "during the middle ages the Bishop of Rome was the succor of the defenceless, the helper of the weak, the protector of the innocent." Again I must answer that the power for good which the popes were able to exert during those ages of barbarism and cruelty came from their divine office, their supremacy in the Christian world; and their primacy did not come of their noble deeds, but was received from Christ. Whatever the causes may be, in a word, which have strengthened and extended the authority of popes, they did not create that authority. Its existence is prior to their action and independent of it.

"If the whole of Christendom," says Cardinal Newman, "is to form one kingdom, one head is essential; at least this is the experience of eighteen hundred years. As the Church grew into form, so did the power of the pope develop; and wherever the power of the pope has been renounced decay and division have been the consequence."

Unity is essential to catholicity. Only that can be universal which is one. A Catholic Church made up of dissevered and non-intercommunicating branches is not a living Church. It is no Church at all. It is a fiction of the brain.

To talk of a Catholic Church composed of churches which refuse to recognize one another, which condemn one another, anathematize one another, and withhold the sacraments from one another, is to make a mockery of Christ's religion. The Church of Christ is His "household," His "body," His "sheepfold," His "kingdom"; and a household divided within itself shall be brought to ruin; a body whose members are torn asunder dies; a sheepfold that is scattered falls a prey to the wolf, and a kingdom that is rent has lost its sovereignty. To this pitiful state are all those reduced who, like Bishop Seymour, claim to believe in a visible Catholic Church, and yet refuse to acknowledge the authority of the visible centre of unity established by Christ. The position of the evangelical Protestant who denies that Christ founded a visible Church at all is beyond all question far more reasonable than that of the Anglican or Episcopalian who, holding to a visible Church, is unable to find a visible centre of unity, and is therefore driven to create a fictitious Church, patched up of disjointed and opposing sects. And even this is not the worst result of a system so radically vicious. Since according to this view, which is Bishop Seymour's, the Church Catholic no longer exists as a living organism, but is disrupted and lies scattered through the world in broken and fragmentary branches, it follows necessarily that the supreme and infallible authority of the Church is suspended, and consequently that there is no

voice now audible on earth which is competent to interpret the revelation of Christ to men. But this, according to Bishop Seymour's express declaration, is a chief end for which the Church was founded, and we should therefore conclude that the aim and purpose of the God-Man has not been fulfilled.

Again, a Church which professes to be a divine institution, and yet hesitates to claim infallible authority, is self-condemned. The outcome of such a position is plainly seen in the Anglican Church, of which the Episcopal Church of this country is an offshoot. The whole history of Anglicanism is marked by disunion, feebleness, and sterility. The members of this Church are divided on the most essential points of faith and practice. Anglicans, or Episcopalian, believe in the sacraments, and they reject the sacraments ; they believe in the inspiration of the Scripture, and they deny the inspiration of Scripture ; they hold baptismal regeneration as the key of the whole sacramental system, and they reject it as incompatible with the doctrine of justification by faith ; they believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and they maintain that this dogma is absurd ; they believe in the sacramental confession of sins, and they abhor this practice as an abomination. Bishop Seymour reveres the sign of the cross and religious ceremonies, but large numbers of the members of his Church protest that these are the symbols of an idolatrous worship. The Anglican or Episcopal Church contains within its fold men of

beliefs as opposite and contradictory as those of Bishop Colenso and Dr. Pusey, of Dean Stanley and Mr. Maconachie. Nor is this the worst. This Church does not dare, will never dare, to attempt to reconcile these radical contradictions by an authoritative sentence. If to be weak is to be wretched, how unhappy is not the state of Episcopilians! The Church of England owes its origin as a distinct body to the transference of the supremacy which Christ left in the Church, with its centre in the apostolic see of St. Peter, to the crown—that is, to the nation. There is nationalism stamped upon it as its most essential note and mark, while a distinctive mark of the Catholic Church is that it is non-national and universal. Had the early Christians been willing to accept the supremacy of Cæsar in spiritual matters they would not have been called upon by the Roman Empire to suffer martyrdom. It was precisely because the Church claimed to have an existence separate from that of the nation, with an autonomy of its own, that the early Christians were held to be the enemies of the state and worthy of death; and this position, which the Catholic Church has maintained from age to age, has again and again been made the pretext for assault upon her rights by the princes of this world. It is the special glory of the popes that they have never consented to deliver up the sovereignty of Christ to tyrants, or kings, or potentates, or conquerors, or parliaments, or senates, or nations clamoring like a mob. But the one article of faith which Anglicans agree in

holding is the royal supremacy. The king, be he atheist, or materialist, or pagan, is the visible head of the Church. In a similar way, the Greek Church, when it broke loose from the Apostolic See of St. Peter, became the slave of the emperors of Constantinople, and later of the Turkish sultan, as the Russian Church is the creature of the czar. Before Christ came into the world religion, not excepting that of the Jews, existed only as a national institution. Each people had its gods, who were the enemies of the gods of other nations, and the idea of a catholic or non-national religion would have been considered not only visionary but wrong. But the Son of Man, taking the highest view of man, saw in him not the citizen of a state, or the offspring of this or that race, but the child of God, and hence he founded a religion not for this or that nation or race of men, but for all men. Such a religion is catholic, and to be catholic it must be one, and to be one it must have a centre of unity; and this is the Catholic Church spread throughout the world and in communion with the see of St. Peter, upon whom Christ built His Church, to whom He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to whom He gave charge of His universal flock, whose faith He confirmed and made incapable of heresy. This is that Church with which, as St. Irenæus says, "every other church should agree on account of its superiority of headship"; from which St. Cyprian declares "unity begins"; of which St. Ambrose affirms, "Where St. Peter

is, there is the Church"; of which St. Jerome speaks when he says, "Whoso gathereth not with thee, scattereth"; and of which St. Optatus pronounces that "he is a schismatic and a sinner who against that singular chair sets up another." This is that Church to which heresy has never had access, whose faith from the beginning was praised throughout the world, whose children enriched with their martyr-blood the Roman soil, whose sacred bones lie buried in the catacombs. This is the mother of churches, who sent St. Augustine to England, St. Patrick to Ireland, St. Boniface to Germany, St. Remy to Gaul; who came to the New World with Columbus, and led St. Francis Xavier to India. She is not an intruder here, as Bishop Seymour charges. She was here with De Soto and Marquette, with La Salle and Hennepin, in the days when these wild prairies would not have been pleasant camping-grounds for the nice and refined ministers of Episcopalianism. This is the Church which, as Bishop Seymour declares, saved Christianity in its early struggles, and which during the middle ages was the bulwark of the defenceless and help of the weak. And to this mother of the souls of men two-thirds of the Christians of the whole world still belong. Her Sovereign Pontiff still sits in the chair of Peter; her bishops are spread throughout the world, her priests and missionaries are in every land, and her children are in every nation. She speaks all languages, lives in all climates, holds controversy on all subjects of human thought. She watches

over the orphan and the sick, throws the mantle of mercy over the fallen, withstands emperors and statesmen, rebukes sin in high places, and casts out from her communion the noblest and the most gifted if they refuse to accept her teachings.

Surely Bishop Seymour commits a blunder when he attempts to make it appear that only ignorance of the Bible and ecclesiastical history can lead men to abandon the Episcopal system for the Catholic Church. He does not forget that Newman, and Manning, and Faber, and Ward, and Wilberforce, and Marshall, and Allies, and hundreds of others, of whom nearly anything may be said rather than that they are ignorant of the Bible and ecclesiastical history, have sacrificed almost everything that men hold dear in this world to enter the one fold of Christ. When men believe in a divine Church, built by the hand of God, they want a real, living Church, resting firmly on the solid earth, with well-defined form, and stone fitting into stone, so that the whole edifice rises heavenward in beauty, strength, and symmetry. If you can point only to a Church whose foundations are not secure, whose arches threaten to crumble, they will go out rather into the open air and return to nature-worship. It is in vain, therefore, that Bishop Seymour hopes that the Episcopal Church may become the rallying-point through which Catholicity may be given to all the world. The rallying-point for all the world must have strength, and power, and endurance, and fixness. The Episcopal Church is not a point at all;

it is many points—heterogeneous, conflicting, opposite. They cannot agree among themselves, and it were an idle fancy to imagine that they may become the means of making all the world agree. No; if the Christian world is ever to be reunited, as all good men pray it may be, the point of union must be the centre of unity, the see of Peter, which Christ Himself has made the keystone of the arch that spans the earth and reaches to heaven.

In thanking you, my brethren, for your kind attention I will conclude with the words which the great St. Augustine addressed to the Donatist schismatics more than fourteen hundred years ago. “Brethren,” he says, “come ye who wish to be engrafted in the vine. Ah! the grief to see you lying so, lopped off. Reckon up the priests even from the chair of Peter, and behold in that long line who succeeded whom. That chair is the rock which the proud gates of hell do not overcome. All ye, then, who love peace, judge and decide.”

VII.

CATHOLIC WORSHIP

“But you are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the church of the first-born, who are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood, which speaketh better than that of Abel.”—HEB. xii. 22-24.

WHAT divine privilege is not this, my brethren, of which we are made partakers! To dwell in Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and in the company of innumerable angels and of the spirits of the just made perfect; to be the children of the Church of the first born, founded by the hand of God’s Son, and in the covenant of His blood declared to be holy and imperishable! “Wherefore,” says St. Paul, “seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” This high companionship with angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and the cloud of witnesses who have borne testimony to the faith is a part of religion, which is communion with God and the Godlike, which is life and love,

the opposite of death and isolation. The true believers are one in heart and soul, united in faith and hope, and are, therefore, necessarily a society that is a Church, a spiritual kingdom, an imperial, heavenly power; and since they are men, this soul-life and kingdom of heaven must conform to the conditions of human existence. It cannot be purely spiritual, for man has a body; it cannot address itself solely to the intellect, for he has a heart; nor to the reason alone, for he has imagination. Man, of all we know, is most like to God, and the divine image is best seen in his full-orbed and perfect nature, and not in this or that separate faculty. Worship, therefore, which is the expression and form of faith, should spring from the complete man, soul and body, which should pray and work together, like "the two-celled heart, beating, with one full stroke, life." This is the only spiritual and true adoration which is possible to us, whose souls, imprisoned in matter and wedded to form, must act in obedience to the laws of nature; nor would it ever have occurred to any one to imagine that a formless worship would not be an altogether unreal one, had not the necessities of controversy required this position. But the bias once given, the spiritual view of innumerable men is obstructed, and they imagine that a ceremonial religion is necessarily an empty and unreal faith. The form, indeed, may be where the reality is not; but wherever the real thing is it will body itself forth in form, and without this it cannot be preserved. Ceremony is born

of reverence, respect, love. It is, as well as speech, a language—the symbol of inward states of belief and feeling; and to remark that the observance may exist without the sentiment is as idle as to state that words may speak false. Thought is more accurately expressed by speech, feeling by ceremony. A gesture, a sigh, a look, tell more of the heart's deep emotion than many words.

As religion is not a thought, but the laying hold on God by faith and hope and love, cold and logical discourse but feebly conveys its life and power. The soul that believes and loves would sing, or adore in silence, knowing that its deep peace is inexpressible; or, like the Psalmist, it would call upon the sun and moon and stars, or whatever else is great or beautiful, to recount God's mercies. Faith, which makes all things possible, holds life cheap, and counts death a gain, can find no symbol which will show forth its God-like strength and certainty; and hence it longs for companionship, and would compel all things in heaven and on earth to take up the chorus of its triumphant song of praise and adoration. To hold the same opinions is but a weak bond of sympathy, for it is of the nature of opinion to be changeable, unsettled, and on the surface; but faith reaches the inner core of life, welds soul to soul, and from this central unity evolves into a visible communion and glorious Church of God. In the same way love must find a voice and utter its deep mystery. Upon every tree and flower it would write the name of the Beloved, and make

the wide earth with the over-arching heaven a temple for its worship. Now, religion is to believe in God and to love Him. Is it not most certain, then, that faith and love will build an altar, and offer up thereon whatever amongst men is held to be most precious and desirable? Ceremony, therefore, is the very body and voice of religion. And as the foliage does not merely adorn the tree but protects the fruit, so the observance nourishes the inward life of faith. The power of religious ideas over us is intimately dependent upon particular names and practices and forms with which we have grown accustomed to associate them, and which have created special sentiments in us. What appear to be mere forms and observances are in this way so really a part of our individual and social structure that the changing of them involves a prodigious revolution and unsettles all other things, too. The marriage rite, one might think, is but a ceremony; and yet were it done away with Christian civilization could hardly survive. And so the Sunday is only an observance, but one which is intimately blended with our whole moral and social life. In religious worship the form is as essential as in poetry or music. Translate the poet's song into common prose; the idea remains, but all its power and beauty are gone. Religious ceremonies which have sprung from deep faith and ardent love, and have been for centuries the forms in which the highest hope and profoundest reverence of believing men have sought expression,

have thereby acquired a sacredness and consecration which cannot possibly attach to newer and profaner rites. The associations which cluster around them give them eloquence and solemnity ; they touch us like voices heard in the stillness of night, like the monuments and relics of the generations that are dead. That these prayers have been uttered by our fathers for a thousand years and more ; that so they were baptized into faith in Christ ; that so they vowed the sacred love of wedded life ; that so they confessed their sins and then ate of the Bread of Angels ; that so, at the close of the brief day which we call life, they were anointed and laid to rest amid holy sprinklings and solemn supplications, trusting to God's Son to redeem them from the jaws of death —that this was their faith and this the symbol ought to be sufficient to awaken in us reverent and devout thoughts. He who, after years of toil and honorable service, having wandered far and seen cities and men, returns at length to the fire-side where long ago, kneeling by his mother, he raised to God a pure and childlike heart, instinctively bows his head in deep reverence, as though angels were still watching there. Are the shrines of religion where generations of our fathers have prayed and wept less sacred ? And what inspiration is there not in this spiritual presence and the encompassing cloud of witnesses ! Nothing more elevates the mind than the consciousness of being one of a great and victorious company. The meanest soldier both feels and gives himself cre-

dit for a part of the heroic valor of an invincible army. And that this cloud of witnesses are scattered through the world and speak to us from remote centuries, as in invisible whispering-galleries, but serves to heighten the power and effect of their testimony. The voices of those who have reached the haven of rest make strong the hearts that are still tossed upon the waves; and the banner of victory unfurled from heavenly citadels by saints who have fought the good fight and won the crown is as the promise of dawn to weary watchers of the night. I never knew the sacred love I bore the flag of my country until I saw it float in the ports of strange nations. It was like a spirit's presence, a messenger from home, telling me of those I loved, recalling dreams of other days when life was fresh with fragrance and hope. The ocean seemed swallowed up and I forgot that I was a wanderer in foreign lands. I breathed again the native air of liberty, and beheld my great country swelling with youthful power and infinite promise from sea to sea. The noblest races, it has been said, are those which are able to make the most serious use of poetry. The purest religion is also the most lovely and in every way beautiful, creating the divinest symbols of its faith, and thereby becoming in some sense an embodiment and revelation of the Infinite. How strange that men should have imagined that the only right worship is through the discursive faculty and dry, mechanical conduct! May not our feelings be holy as well as our thoughts? May not imagination bring

us as near to the unapproachable God as argument? Has not the heart reasons of its own which the mind does not understand? Our blessed Lord is never controversial and argumentative, unless when he deals with captious Scribes and Pharisees who, having the name of religion, had denied the power thereof. He praises the mind of little children, which is full of wonder and awe; is not cold or critical, but looks upon all things as types and tokens of the One Invisible. With what a reverent and religious eye He beholds, nature, and finds in all things symbols of the loving care and watchful providence of our heavenly Father! He speaks a sublime and simple poetry which touches all hearts. The lilies of the field and the birds of the air, the whitening harvest and the feeding flocks, day and night, morning and evening, the shepherd and his fold, the hen that gathers her little ones beneath her patient wing, are all on His divine lips, full of thoughts of religious trust and love. He has indeed founded, and for ever, the worship of God in spirit and in truth; but He has not therefore taken away the visible element, without which worship is impossible. "Wouldst thou plant for eternity," says a writer of genius, "then plant into the deep, infinite faculties of man, his fantasy and heart; wouldst thou plant for year and day, then plant into his shallow, superficial faculties, his self-love and arithmetical understanding, what will grow there." Man is not a spirit, and, though the soul is the higher part of his nature, it is in this life, in

some sense, subordinate and subject to the body. It is like a noble musician who is reduced to silence when he finds no proper instrument to utter his harmonies. Again, the religion of Christ does not come forth directly from the invisible God. We receive it from the sacred lips and heart of God's Son. It is heralded by songs of angels, and the stars look down upon the new-born Saviour with a more ethereal joy. Shepherds adore and kings come up to offer gifts. As the Christ is the manifest God, so is His kingdom visible. "Arise, shine," says the prophet to the Church, "for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. . . . The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. . . . The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet. . . . Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations. Spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. . . . No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt con-

demn." Here is surely an imperial and visible power, established in the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills, to which the nations bow in homage. Here is that memorial to all the world which Christ founded upon the rock, and against which He promised the gates of hell should not prevail. Here is that kingdom to which, standing triumphant over the grave, He committed His immortal and Godlike power, saying, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations"; which began like the mustard-seed, "which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." A kingdom it is in the world, but upholding itself and spreading itself abroad by weapons of heavenly temper, and founded upon "the word of truth, of meekness and righteousness." "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun; when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Into this kingdom Christ will gather His sons from afar, and His daughters from the ends of the earth, making for them "a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert"; and "many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His path. . . . All they from Saba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show

forth the praises of the Lord." Must not this kingdom of God and of the soul be clothed with beauty and strength, "in golden vesture, surrounded with variety"? Shall not this bride of the Prince of Peace, all fair and without blemish, upon whose heaven-seeking brow Time writes no wrinkle, advance,

"And, harp in hand, rehearse the King of Glory—
From His mild advent till His countenance
Shall dissipate the seas and mountains hoary"?

Shall she not make heaven's pathway

"Distinct with signs, through which, in fixed career,
As through a zodiac moves the ritual year"?

And shall we not behold her, now rising in young and eager life, as when the warmer sun dissolves the icy bands of winter, and all the earth buds forth to God, and every wind bears to heaven its incense-breathing prayer; and now in solemn hue and sober mood, as one made serious by duties fulfilled and patient contemplation of mortality, yet beautiful still, as are the woods when autumn has laid here and there a fiery finger upon the leaves? Is not the human heart a divinely-formed instrument, sweet or harsh as it is gently or rudely touched? And what is there that does not play upon this heart of mystery? The hour of the day; morn and noon and night; clouds and stars and the placid moon, riding all alone and yet not sad; the scented breeze of May, and sultry August's stifling breath, and the cold, damp days

when the rotten woodland drips; songs of birds, and flowing waters, and humming bees; life and death in their thousand forms; the angel-face of the unconscious babe; the beaming soul of the blue-eyed boy; the downy cheek of youth; the set firmness of manhood's brow; the wrinkled lean-ness of age and sorrowful nothingness of second childhood; the soul of a friend touching a friend's soul—all, all that is, plays upon this human heart: God and His angels, the Evil One and his demons; and this instrument is sweet or harsh as it is touched. May not the bride of Christ take the harp of David to soothe the troubled soul of Saul? May she not, with the Royal Psalmist, call upon all nations and peoples to praise the Lord, because His mercy is great; to sing to Him a new song—His praise in the Church of the saints? “Let Israel rejoice in Him, and let the sons of Sion exult in their King. Let them sing to Him in chorus: let them chant to Him with timbrel and psaltery.”

“Sing ye to the Lord: sing to our God upon the harp. Who covereth the heavens with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth. Who maketh the grass to grow on the mountains, and herbs for the service of men. Who giveth to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that call upon Him. . . . Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise thy God, O Sion! Because He hath strengthened the bolts of thy gates, He hath blessed thy children within thee. He hath placed peace within thy borders, and filleth thee

with the fat of corn. . . . Praise ye the Lord in His holy places. . . . Praise Him with sound of trumpet: praise Him with psaltery and harp. Praise Him with timbrel and choir: praise Him with strings and organs. Praise Him on high-sounding cymbals: praise Him on cymbals of joy. Let every spirit praise the Lord."

What depths of joy, and peace, and delight, and ecstasy are hidden within the soul of religion! All profound emotion tends to religion. Whoever has loved, whoever has grieved, has believed. As the hart panteth for the fountains of living water, the soul is athirst for God. Who, then, shall forbid the daughter of heaven to utter her deep thought and love? Who shall silence her song of triumph and sweet delight? Who shall take away her crown of glory, or hush the voices of the young and innocent who walk before her, scattering flowers and looking heavenward? Or who shall find fault because her loveliness leads captive the hearts of men? Does not God Himself speak to us from sun and moon and star, from plant and flower, and spreading plain and mountain height? Are not the heavens and the earth vocal with His praise? The spouse of Christ, in the divine inspiration, which love only can receive, knows that God's Son has not destroyed nature by grace, but has lifted up and purified the visible by reuniting it with the unseen, the higher world. She has no Manichean fear of matter, knowing full well that she may

tread on scorpions and serpents, and proceed unhurt upon her peaceful way. In Christ and through Him God is reconciled to matter, which is become the evidence of things that do not appear, and a stepping-stone to heaven. Our blessed Lord has gone before His Church, clothed in purple, crowned with thorns, and bearing His cross. "Suffer it to be so," He said to John when, in awe, he hesitated to perform the baptismal rite, "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" He was circumcised; He went up for the feasts to Jerusalem; He kept the Sabbath, but not pharisaically; He sent the lepers to the priests for the sin-offering; He paid the Temple tax; He bade the multitude obey those who sat in the chair of Moses. He himself made use of ceremonies—He fasted; He washed the feet of His apostles; He breathed upon them and commanded them to anoint with oil; He made a paste of mud and touched it to the eyes of the blind man; He fell upon His face in prayer. All this is ceremony, and we have here in germ the seed of that blest tree whose boughs overshadow the earth, giving refreshment and peace to the weary and troubled souls of men. Christian worship did not at once spring forth into full and complete existence any more than the Christian Church. Through what superhuman conflicts and ineffable sufferings was that little flock timidly gathered at Jerusalem to grow into the world-embracing Catholic Church of God! Had it, without trial and battle and heroic effort,

suddenly spread over the earth, like a cloud which, appearing on the horizon, quickly darkens all the heavens, this would have been no good omen of imperishable strength and immortal life. When our Saviour walked among men, and for a long time thereafter, the religious observances of Christians were of the simplest kind. There was poverty and persecution, and the bride of Christ was a wanderer and an outcast, having not where to lay her head, but dwelling in caves and deserts and secret hiding-places. There were no various ceremonies, no mystic vestments, no vast cathedrals, no rich music. The Blessed Sacrament was instituted in an upper room, and in an upper room the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles. At Philippi St. Paul and the believers "went out of the city by a river-side where prayer was wont to be made." St. Peter was in prayer on the house-top when he saw the vision, and St. Philip baptized the Ethiopian in the desert. Driven forth from the dwellings of men, these our fathers and brothers in Christ made the whole earth God's temple, offering up to Him everywhere the clean oblation of their lives. But he that loves God with a love which gives its life has therewith consecrated all other things to His service; and when at last the cross is borne in triumph before an advancing and invincible army, every height and eminence bows to receive it and bear it up. Aerial spires lift it to the clouds; it crowns the brows of kings; it is placed as an ensign of hope and victory on the summit of all

earthly things, and, standing above the grave, proclaims that Life for evermore is lord of Death. And so the Church, when her centuries of martyrdom are past,

“At length,
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.”

And as flowers open to welcome the coming morn, and birds send forth their joyful notes, and the earth is glad, so all the arts bowed to the Bride of Christ, and in the light of her countenance caught a more heavenly inspiration. “The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. . . . O poor little one, tossed with tempest, without all comfort, behold I will lay thy stones in order, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy bulwarks of jasper, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of lovely stones. . . . And the gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. . . . And thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” “Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself for her, that He might present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish.” This thought is ever with me—that in our blessed Lord is the deepest, the strongest, the most real love which

men have known ; that the Church is born of this love ; and that it is the property of love to clothe its object with all beauty and all comeliness. Things even vile and without quality it can transpose to form and dignity. Who can ever forget the worship of sweet St. Magdalen, once she had learned to know her Lord? Weeping, she knelt at the feet of Jesus, "and washed His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment." O deep, overflowing love! O sweet, observant ceremony !

" O tears that spring from hope's eternal fount
And from the bruised heart of love !
These pearls do silver o'er the souls that mount
On wings of light to God above."

And to Simon the Pharisee, and to all unhappy men who do not love, our blessed Lord turns and speaks: " Seest thou this woman ? I entered into thy house ; thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she with tears hath washed my feet and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss ; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint ; but she with ointment hath anointed my feet. Wherefore I say to thee, many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." God's nearest sanctuary is the heart, but when the heart is full it overflows. He seeks adorers like Himself, who worship in spirit and in truth ; but spirit is life, is motion, is voice ; and

truth, to be known and loved, must be clothed on with form and beauty. The spiritual worship which puts away ceremony and observance fatally dissolves into "the silent sort at the altar of the Unknown." "Just what makes worship impressive," says Joubert, "is its publicity, its external manifestation, its sound, its splendor, its observance, universally and visibly holding its way through all the details both of our outward and of our inward life." And again: "Religious evolutions, as processions, genuflections, bowing the body and the head, moving forward and standing still, are neither of little influence nor of little value. They supple the heart to piety and bend the mind to faith. To be pious we must make ourselves little; and hence the saying that piety leads us to annihilate ourselves before God." Not substantially different is the thought of the two most philosophic and religious minds among Protestants. "I am of opinion," says Leibnitz, "that God does not disregard as unworthy of His service the use of musical instruments, nor vocal harmony, nor beautiful hymns, nor sacred eloquence, nor lights, nor incense, nor precious vestments and jewelled vases, nor statues and graven images of pious objects, nor architecture and perspective, nor public processions, the chiming of bells, the spreading of carpets, and other expedients which the overflowing piety of the people has devised for the divine honor, and which some persons, in their morose simplicity, despise. And this may be proved by arguments as well as by examples.

For the first-fruit and fine essence of all things and of all arts is due to God. Of old, in the very infancy of the art, it was believed, and must ever be acknowledged, that poetry, which is but a more heavenly kind of eloquence, and, as it were, a language of angels, could not be more worthily employed than in celebrating the praises of God. And this is also true of music, the twin sister of poetry. Nor can the most eminent architects better show forth their genius, nor the mightiest princes their munificence, than in building temples and other monuments to the honor of God and the uses of piety." "That which men have accounted religion," says the author of the *Analogy*, "has had, generally speaking, a great and conspicuous part in all public appearances, and the face of it has been kept up with great reverence throughout all ranks, from the highest to the lowest; and without somewhat of this nature piety will grow languid even among the better sort of men, and the worst will go on in an abandoned course, with fewer interruptions from within than they would have were religious reflections forced oftener upon their minds, and consequently with less probability of their amendment." And again: "The form of religion may indeed be where there is little of the thing itself, but the thing itself can not be preserved without the form." There are not two Gods, one of matter and one of spirit. There is but one God, and He is the creator of all things, visible and invisible. He is the Lord of the body as well as of the soul. We must believe

in Him with the heart ; we must also confess Him with the mouth ; we must worship Him within the sanctuary of the soul ; we must praise Him in the assembly of the people. He is the light and joy of our inward life, and our voices must sing to Him, and our knees adore Him, and our hands be lifted to Him in supplication." "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service." Another consideration, my brethren, will lead us still nearer to the sacred and imposing ceremony which has brought us together. Society springs from religious faith and rests upon this divine foundation. Men are drawn together when they look to heaven. Wherever they struggle for truth and justice and freedom they are united in the name of God, and when they "are left without God and without hope" society is broken up by hate and lust. Society is made possible by religion, and religion is made strong by society. "It is certain," says Novalis, "my belief gains infinitely the moment I can convince another mind thereof." It is when "two or three are gathered together" that our Divine Lord promises to be in the midst of them. Except in union with his fellows, man is not great or able to achieve great results, and the *væ soli* is God's curse upon all selfishness and all pride. Religion, therefore, must have a public life and worship, both for the good of society and for the strengthening of itself, and hence it must have public edifices, churches, cathedrals, and basilicas.

“ The Church,” says St. Thomas of Aquin, “ is not built for God, but for those who worship Him”—*Non propter Deum, sed propter ipsos adorantes.* He who made heaven and earth is not shut up within walls. He dwells in His own immensity. His abiding is in the heavens, and the earth is His footstool. “ His pavilion round about are the thick clouds of the sky, and His voice is as the mutterings of the thunder afar off. He stands and measures the earth. He beholds and drives asunder the nations. The mountains see Him and tremble. The deep utters its voice and lifts up its hands. He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumults of the people. He maketh all things, stretcheth forth the heavens alone, spreadeth abroad the earth by Himself.” He needs us not, and if our works find favor in His sight it is as a father listens to the feeble stammerings of his infant child and smiles upon his toy-world, which a breath may puff away. He needs us not, but He has made us for Himself, and our heart is troubled till it finds rest in Him. Therefore must we have holy places, whither the soul may flee from the loud and garish world to sweet thoughts of peace and love, like the dove to her nest. From the crowd God is banished; and in the noisy, babbling street His Sacred Name is profaned, and therefore are His tabernacles to our souls

“ As to the sandy desert fountains are,
With palm-groves shaded at wide intervals.”

“I will draw nigh to the altar of God, who gave joy to my youth. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth. They have led me and have brought me into Thy holy mountain and into the place of Thy dwelling. Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Trust in God, for I will praise Him ever, the salvation of my countenance and my God.” O my mother! how thy sacred shrines and holy spires dwell upon the soul, and soothe it, and raise it up, and comfort it!

“For thou dost soothe the heart, thou Church of Rome,
By thy unwearied watch and varied round
Of service in thy Saviour’s holy home.
I cannot walk the sultry streets
But the wide porch invites to still retreats
Where passion’s thirst is calmed and care’s unthankful gloom.
There, on a foreign shore,
The homesick solitary finds a friend ;
Thoughts prisoned long for lack of speech outpour
Their tears, and doubts in resignation end.”

So wrote that great Englishman, when yet a wanderer and in the dark, whose exquisite genius and unsullied life have thrown around his name the serene beauty which is thought to come of the consecrating power of time alone. But not alone or chiefly as a refuge for the weary and heavy-laden is the temple of religion precious. Its beneficent influence is greater than that of any other edifice reared by the hand of man. It is the highest school of wisdom known to men, to which, after weary wanderings and anxious doubt-

ings, the human mind ever returns, confessing that holiness is best, that righteousness is life, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of understanding. Within this holy sanctuary man feels that he is no mere worldling but a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Here through the purifying wave he is born anew, a slave no longer, but the child of God, clothed with the white robe of innocence and panoplied in the liberty of heaven. Here he is fed with the Bread of Angels; here his soul drinks in God's Word; here he takes the banner of Christ and is confirmed His true knight; here to the virginal maiden of his heart's love he breathes the words that make them one on earth and in heaven; here when sin has darkened the light of his countenance he seeks forgiveness in the sorrow which yearns to pour its guilt into a sympathetic heart; and here at last, when his course is run and death has seemed to triumph, is he brought once more, and the mother of his soul, who so long had watched over him, as though even now she heard the trump of angels, speaks the divine word, "He that believeth in me, even though he be dead, shall live"; and so, not doubting, she lays him to rest beneath the shadow of the cross. "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul yearneth and panteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. For the sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself where she may lay her young: Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my

God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord: they shall praise Thee for ever and ever. . . . For better is one day in Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." And more blessed yet are we, my brethren, who worship at a shrine still nearer to heaven. "Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first, saith the Lord of hosts, and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." And so the angels sang of glory and peace when God's Son came, clothed with love divine, which holds Him captive still—love's prisoner and sacrifice. Here is the Real Presence; hidden beneath the mystic sacramental veil is the very Christ who lives and loves, and is our Lord and our God. Him we adore, Him we praise; to Him we lift our voices, to Him we bend the knee, to Him we bow the head, to Him we come, like the kings of old, bearing gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. He indeed was born in a stable, but He was also transfigured on the mount; He was nailed to the cross, but he also rode in triumph amidst the waving of palm-branches and the singing of hosannas. The stable is become a basilica, and the cross the highest ensign under which men can meet and embrace. "Let us build here three tabernacles," exclaimed St. Peter when he beheld the resplendent countenance of his Divine Master in heavenly converse with Moses and Elias; and the Church, following the inspiration of the

Prince of the Apostles and obedient to the voice of love, is ever eager to build temples to Him who, when He walked the earth, had not whereon to lay His head. And you, my brethren, are come to-day, under the guidance of the shepherd of your souls, to take your place among the countless believers, of every age and every country, who have left imperishable monuments of their faith and love, to speak when they were dead, and point the silent finger to heaven. This is your day of gladness, this is the day which the Lord hath made to fill your hearts with joy and exultation. Here is the patriarch of the West, who, of all the faithful band who in the morning of life went forth with him to scatter the good seed, alone remains, and, like a happy autumn field, sees his rich harvest reaped and bound in golden sheaves, and gathered to his crown; here are venerable prelates come from afar; here is the throng of faithful priests; here is the crowd of believers; the organ utters praise, the cloud of incense rises, and all hearts are bowed in thanksgiving for this day. And I, too, come, as a son who returns to his father's house, bearing dutiful tribute of reverence and love, and the sweet fragrance of bygone days.

VIII.

THE VIRGIN MOTHER.

THE Christian religion is a body of facts and a system of doctrines, and hence it is both historical and dogmatic. Its central idea is the Incarnation, and its supreme fact is the manifestation of the Son of God as the Son of Man also. The essence of Christianity is found in the Person of Jesus Christ. He not only founded the worship of God in spirit and in truth, but He brought into the world a new principle of life, which is Himself. He is for ever the ideal man, and this ideal is made possible to others only in so far as they participate in the life of God's Son. He has given us the secret and the method of the perfect way, and in Him alone can we find the strength to walk therein securely to the end. He is the Life, and the Life is the light of men, and to those who receive Him He gives power to become the sons of God. He who believes in Him has life everlasting ; his faith is to him an exhaustless fountain of immortal life. He is come into the world that men may have a fuller and more abounding life. His commandments are life and His ways are peace. Death is not an obstacle ; for He is the resurrection and the life,

above death and beyond the grave. "Now this is eternal life: that they know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Hence Christianity is not, at least primarily, speculative; it is not a philosophy. God has not been pleased to save the world by dialectics. It is a principle of life, having a concrete and historical existence, insinuating itself into the minds and hearts of men, enlightening and purifying them, and so unfolding itself in higher and holier modes of living and propagating itself on every side. The preaching of the Word, the sacramental system, the hierarchical organization, the dogmatic creed, the ascetic discipline, are but the different forms through which this principle of the divine life works upon the souls of men to purify them and prepare them for the Beatific Vision. To consider any Christian doctrine or practice separately from its organism would be as misleading and unsatisfactory as to attempt to form a theory of the earth without bearing in mind its relations to the solar and sidereal systems. As in nature nothing exists of itself or for itself, so in the religion of Christ there is perfect and harmonious interdependence of doctrines and disciplines. The childish and ridiculous physics of the ancients is familiar to all who have paid any attention to such subjects. They did not observe nature to discover what really is and happens; but they gave themselves up to vain reasonings upon abstract notions and theories as to what nature is or does, and as a consequence they vanished in their

own empty thoughts. Arguments based upon theories of Christianity have led to conclusions equally absurd. The chaos of religious opinion and belief among the sects is the direct and fatal consequence of this proceeding. Christianity is not a theory ; it is a secular and world-wide fact, with a definite and far-reaching history. Its influence is felt in all the great conflicts and struggles of mankind for now nearly two thousand years ; it has undergone the severest trials, has kindled the noblest enthusiasm, has awakened the bitterest hate, has taken part in the most furious controversies, and has ~~withstood~~ assaulted from within and from without. It has maintained itself against corruption, ignorance, and lawlessness. It has preserved its organization intact in spite of kings and parliaments and national jealousies. In the face of philosophers and heresiarchs it has, without faltering for a moment, affirmed its right to teach in the name of God, and has built upon the central fact of the personal union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ the most complete and faultless dogmatic system.

To make the individual the measure of Christian truth is as unreasonable as to make him the measure of the laws of nature. No one believes that the laws of nature or the facts of history are what any man may choose to think them to be. The most extreme idealist admits that for all practical purposes the objectivity of the external world must be assumed. It is therefore manifest that to apply a purely subjective test to an historical

religion is absurd. The Christian religion is not what each man thinks it to be. It has an existence of its own, and is what the facts of its history prove it to be. The central fact in this history is, as I have already stated, the manifestation in the world of the Son of God as the Son of man also.

The power and wisdom of God are shown forth in the creation of the world; and His infinite love is revealed in the redemption of man. And thus the problem of religion and that of human life receive their final solution. Christianity is the absolute religion, which whosoever refuses to accept is driven fatally to atheism or to pantheism. A theory of the universe which would make any other religion possible is not even conceivable.

Again, the fact of Christianity is before and above its documents. Its significance and teachings are to be sought in its history, of which the Written Word is but a small part. It is itself its only sufficient witness. By the union of a Divine Person with human nature man has been brought into a new and mysterious relationship with God; and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the supernatural creation which flows from the Blood of Christ a new and mystic source of truth and sanctity is opened to the human race.

As Christ is a historical and Divine Person, His Church is a historical and divine fact. The person of Christ determines the value of the apostolic ministry, of the sacramental system, and of the inspired Scriptures.

By bearing these principles in mind we shall easily perceive the position which is assigned to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the divine economy for the salvation of man. Mary mediates between the divine and the human natures; she is the channel through which they flow to form the personal union; she is the only human witness to the Incarnation. Her fate is for evermore associated with the person and life of her Divine Son. Since He is the God-Man, she is the Mother of the God-Man; since He is the highest, the holiest, the purest being who has ever appeared on earth, she is the Mother of this majesty, and holiness, and purity.

Mary is the most beloved Daughter of the Eternal Father, the most dear Mother of the Eternal Son, the immaculate and virginal Spouse of the Eternal Spirit. She stands apart from her whole race, and her position is her own for evermore on earth and in heaven; and its inviolable strength lies in the fact that it cannot be assailed except through her Son. To think of Mary as only a good woman implies a doubt of the divinity of Christ; and to think of Christ as only a great and wise philosopher implies a doubt of the goodness of Mary. They are united in God, and it is not in the power of man to put them asunder.

To mere reason the Incarnation is an unfathomable mystery, and it is not surprising that this should have been the central point of dispute in all the early conflicts of the Church with heresy. Already in the second century St. Irenæus affirmed

that heresies universally begin or end with the denial of the Incarnation of the Divine Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

In the Arian controversy the divinity of our Lord was the subject in dispute; and in the Apollinarian and Monophysite heresies His manhood was called in question; while Nestorius denied the unity of person in Christ. To defend the true doctrine of the Incarnation against all these heresies the Church could discover no more certain and effectual means than to declare the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God. The divine maternity of Mary witnesses both to the Godhead and the manhood of Christ, and to His personal unity. In the sixteenth century heresy took an opposite course. The true doctrine of the Incarnation was maintained, but the position and office of the Blessed Virgin were denied. The event, however, has again shown that they only who honor and love Mary can think rightly of Jesus. Protestants shrank from calling Mary the Mother of God, and the force of logic has driven them in large numbers to deny that Christ is God; and even in the more orthodox sects there is no longer found an explicit and definite belief in the Incarnation. The Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin has grown from the contemplation of the supreme and central fact of Christianity; the Protestant notion concerning her has been formed from texts or omissions of Scripture.

Catholics can never conceive of the Christian religion as contained in Bible-texts, by which it

cannot be even adequately described. The sublimest psalm in praise of Mary could not say anything greater of her than that she is the Mother of Jesus. Had our Divine Lord Himself spoken of her with all the poetic depth and beauty which breathes in the Sermon on the Mount, His words would have been feeble compared with the ineffable dignity which he conferred upon her by becoming her Son. Protestants go peering through the Bible to pick out texts that will throw some slight upon Mary, and their eyes are blind to that lowly beauty and immaculate purity which drew an angel from heaven to declare her worth and dignity. "Hail! full of grace," said the angelic messenger, whom the light of heaven has not made unmindful of this fair child of God and man. "The Lord is with thee." And shall we not deem it the sweetest privilege to walk close by the side of this fair Mother, that so, if it may be, some shadow of the presence of the Lord may refresh our weary souls?

What need is there of texts? Has not St. Elizabeth proclaimed her the most blessed of women, freighted with the peace and the joy of the world? Has not her own lowly spirit, in the ecstasy of a delight which no other mother has ever known, forestalled the voice of mankind, to announce that all generations shall call her Blessed? Has not He who is mighty done great things to her?

The fact is above all praise. "Mary, the Mother of Jesus," is a sweeter and tenderer speech

than all the eulogies of her devoutest servants, who none the less have drawn their inspiration from the purest and holiest love. "Thou and Thy mother," says St. Ephrem, "alone are wholly pure. No spot in Thee, O Lord ; in her no stain." "She was alone," says St. Ambrose, "and wrought the world's salvation." "The unsullied shell," St. Proclus calls her, "which contains the pearl of price"; "the sacred shrine of sinlessness." "Above the angelic orders art thou," says St. Soaphronius. "Him hast Thou borne," says St. Peter Chrysologus, "who bears the world." "Hail ! throne of God," exclaims St. Germain, "house of glory, propitiatory altar of the world." "For the whole human race," says St. Irenæus, "Mary is the cause of salvation." "We salute thee," exclaimed St. Cyril of Alexandria in presence of the fathers of Ephesus—"we salute thee, Mary, Mother of God, treasure of the world, inextinguishable lamp, crown of virginity, sceptre and stay of the true faith."

And to her the world-worn Dante kneels, crowning his immortal song with her sweet name :

" O Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Created beings all in lowliness
Surpassing, as in height above them all ;
Term by the eternal counsel pre-ordained ;
Ennobler of thy nature, so advanced
In thee that its great Maker did not scorn
To make Himself His own creation ;
For in thy womb rekindling shone the love
Revealed whose genial influence makes now

This flower to germin in eternal peace ;
 Here thou to us of charity and love
 Art, as the noonday torch ; and art, beneath
 To mortal men, of hope a living spring."

True thoughts of Mary are poetic thoughts. They only who have not known her think coldly and tamely of her. To the pure and humble of heart all things fair and lovely in nature are her symbols. She is Queen of Heaven and of Earth, Star of the sea, Lily of the vale, Rose without thorn. She is fair as the dawn, tender as love, pure as a maiden's thoughts.

" ' Now raise thy view,' "

said St. Bernard to the all-earnest poet of our holy faith—

" ' Now raise thy view
 Unto the visage most resembling Christ ;
 For in her splendor only shalt thou win
 The power to look on Him.' Forthwith I saw
 Such floods of gladness on her visage showered
 From holy spirits winging that profound,
 That whatsoever I had yet beheld
 Had not so much suspended me with wonder
 Or shown me such similitude of God ;
 And He who had to her descended, once,
 On earth, now hail'd in heaven, and on poised wing
 " Ave Maria, Gratia Plena " sang :
 To whose sweet anthem all the blissful court
 From all parts answering, rang, that holier joy
 Brooded the deep serene."

And Milton, too, though he thought not of the Blessed Mary, was yet inspired by a sentiment which devotion to her has created when he sang :

“ So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liv’ried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt.”

What heights of joy and gladness break open above this lowly Virgin, of whom all we know is that she was meek, and humble, and pure, and the Mother of Jesus! She treads again the walks of Paradise; beneath her foot the serpent harmless lies; her head is bathed in zephyrs fanned by angels’ wings. To her belong all things pure and bright. The month of May is Mary’s month. For her the flowers bloom, for her the children sing, and the birds are glad, and the skipping flocks. And through the livelong year, morning, noon, and night, o’er hill and dale, sweet bells prolong the sound of Mary’s name.

The mystic charm that like a heavenly atmosphere enwraps all Catholic lands is nature’s tribute to God’s Mother. O fairest Virgin! why should dry, mechanic controversy, with its cold hands and narrow thoughts, lay hold on thee? May we not praise the moon without stopping to say her light is borrowed? The devout spirit is not critical, and he who worships is blest and does not care to analyze his sentiments. Love is the eternal mystery, which may be felt but never can be known by man.

“ Love,” says Bossuet, “ is the cause of all that we believe. This word persuades me more than all the books. *God has so loved the world!* Is it hard to believe that God loves and that goodness

gives itself?" "We have believed the love," says St. John, "which God has for us." God has loved: all is said. Henceforth no mystery to me shall seem incredible. And the sweet Virgin Mother bears the Fruit of God's love to men. He is on her bosom in the stable; He is in her arms when the kings adore Him; He nestles close to her heart in the flight to Egypt. With her He dwells at Nazareth, hidden in God. O Mother! said I not that all things fair and bright are thine? And yet athwart thy pathway, radiant with the light of heaven lay the shadow of the cross, piercing thy soul like a sword. Thou art worthy to suffer most, for thy love is greatest; and those lips which first adoring touched the infant Saviour's brow must press His cold and pallid form with agony equalled only by thy love. Thou hast borne Him in thy heart; thou hast followed Him from Bethlehem to the cross on Calvary. He is doubly thine —by the holiest love and the divinest sorrow. Henceforth for ever His adorers must be thy servants.

Why should it be necessary to say that the glories of Mary are for the sake of Jesus, and that we acknowledge her to be the first of creatures, only that we may confess Him as our sole creator? The fundamental rule of the honor which we pay to the Blessed Virgin and to all saints is that it is referred to God and our own salvation. We praise God in those whose lives have shown forth His mercy and holiness, and thereby profess that we esteem nothing so much as His love and ser-

vice. All worship is derived from God, and is reflected back to Him from all objects which are good, or beautiful, or true. We honor only those whose example it is right to imitate. Whatever is the object of our worship, says St. Augustine, ought to be the model of our lives; and the Church teaches us to pray for the grace to imitate what we honor. "The festivals of martyrs," says St. Augustine again, "are exhortations to martyrdom."

And only those celebrate the praises of virgins who believe that chastity is a virtue worthy of angels. To take delight in great and noble men and women is one of our best and most universal instincts. The youth who hopes to be an orator can never hear enough of Demosthenes; and he who feels the poet's diviner mind will find in the little that is known of Shakspere's personal history a charm and mystery which will haunt him his lifelong. The fascination of biography is a literary commonplace. A great character, by realizing our dreams, gives a new zest to life and adds the charm of poesy to the solid worth of fact. A nation which has had no great men has led no great life; and a religion which has no saints is self-condemned. It is born of criticism and of controversy, not of inspiration and of faith. What is the Bible but the praise of God in His saints? Leaders of men, great kings, warriors, prophets, priests, are they all. And the New Testament is chiefly the biography of God's Son, with touches here and there revealing the meek face of His im-

maculate Mother, the bowed head of sweet St. Magdalen, Peter's eager faith, and the deeper love of John. And St. Paul to-day stands forth from the inspired page, clear and certain, as once he stood on Mars' Hill, against the Grecian sky, sowing God's word. Shall Christ's saints die with those who heard His voice? Shall they die when the ages of martyrs are gone? Does He not work even until now? Is He not the God of the living? Does He not abide until the centuries fail? Ah! men condemn us for honoring the saints; and Christ will condemn us because we have not known them. Would to God our saint-worship were not dilettanteism! We speak their panegyrics and light candles before their shrines; but they were not children of this world. We are wiser in our generation than they. We believe in time and the things we see; but their hearts' desire was in eternity with the invisible God. To them what appears was shadowy; the unseen alone was substance. They believed; we make believe. A more real faith would spring from a truer love. The measure of their glory is full. We cannot add to it, we cannot take from it; and the honor which we pay them, if it help not ourselves to a higher and more Godlike life, is empty and without meaning. Yet is it not altogether vain to be able to recognize that holiness is the best, that the most perfect saint is the highest man; for it is a gain, and some beginning of progress, to have a right ideal. Most strange is it that devotion to the saints of Christ should be thought to be con-

trary to the spirit of Christ. Those who aim at wealth take delight in the lives of millionaires; fine ladies are deep in whatever concerns the queens of fashion; the soldier will weary you with the battles of his great captains. They drink in the spirit of what they love by studying the history of its chief representatives.

Now, Christ's spirit is not the world's spirit; His ideals are not the world's. To be poor, to be meek, to be humble, to be pure, is not what the world asks of its heroes; and hence the children of this world do not find the lives of the saints beautiful. The Blessed Lord Himself, were He to walk the earth again, they would not know, as their fathers knew Him not. If we but rightly ponder it there is no more certain proof of the anti-Christian spirit of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century than its attitude towards the heroes of Christianity. And this has not escaped even Mr. Froude. After stating that all that Protestants have been able to do with the lives of the saints is to call them lies and point a shallow moral on the credulity of Catholics, he continues: "An atheist could not wish us to say more. If we can really believe that the Christian Church was made over in its very cradle to lies and to the father of lies, and was allowed to remain in his keeping, so to say, till yesterday, he will not much trouble himself with any faith which, after such an admission, we may profess to entertain. For as this spirit began in the first age in which the Church began to have a history, so it continued so long as

the Church as an integral body retained its vitality, and only died out in the degeneracy which preceded and which brought on the Reformation. For fourteen hundred years these stories held their place and rang on from age to age, from century to century. As the new faith widened its boundaries, and numbered ever more and more great names of men and women who had fought and died for it, so long their histories, living in the hearts of those for whom they labored, laid hold of them and filled them; and the devout imagination, possessed with what was often no more than the rumor of a name, bodied it out into life, and form, and reality." In turning with contempt from the example of the saints Protestantism lost the standard of Christian perfection. "Wouldst thou be perfect," said our Saviour to the young man who sought His counsel, "go, sell what thou hast, give it to the poor, and come and follow me." And to follow Him means to walk humbly, meekly, chastely, without offence in all things; and it is for this that the saints have striven. They have renounced the world, they have crucified the flesh; they are lowly, they are tender-hearted, they are merciful, they are patient, tolerant of injury, and slow to think evil. They deem not poverty a hardship, nor obedience a slavery, nor chastity an intolerable yoke. To forego the pleasures of the world is to miss what lures the soul but leaves it hungry still. They believe in God and the better life. They have forsaken all things, and in return have found peace. We may not be

able to follow them, but at least we ought to see, if we believe in Christ, that theirs is the better part. And yet the Protestant view is that the life of a saint is ridiculous. Why? Because he is wise who makes money, who lives comfortably, who knows that hunger and thirst are real, even though God and the soul be mythical. Take no thought of all these things, said Christ, intending thereby to turn the hearts of His disciples primarily and absolutely towards God and His heavenly kingdom; and yet even we Catholics have come to set up a defence of Christ on the ground that those who believe in Him have built railroads and comfortable houses. Think ye that the Son of Man, when He comes again, shall find faith on earth?

The pope himself has never excited so much real or feigned horror among Protestants as Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Even the calm and reasonable Hallam held it to be an open question whether this devotion, which he calls the superstition of the dark ages, was not more injurious to public morals and the welfare of society than the entire absence of all religion would have been. Later in life, it is true, he half-repent of this scepticism and made a feeble apology; but he has left unaltered in the text the passages in which he expressed his early belief. Upon what does he found his opinion? Chiefly upon anecdotes found in the writings of some popular authors of the middle ages, telling how great criminals, who in the midst of their evil deeds still

retained a kind of veneration for the Blessed Virgin, were finally saved from some imminent danger and converted by her miraculous interposition. Such stories are familiar to the readers of the legends of Mary, and the most that can be fairly said of them is that it may be doubted whether this kind of pious legend may not be specially liable to misinterpretation by the depraved and superstitious. But so is the example of the penitent thief; so are the examples of all who, after a life of sin, seem to receive the grace of thorough and true conversion. Assuredly these stories were never related with a view to quiet men in their evil deeds; the aim of their authors was to hold out to those who might be tempted to despair a hope of God's mercy through the intercession of the immaculate and loving Mother of Him who died for all.

I certainly believe, and I think all intelligent Catholics have always believed, that a man who settles himself in a perverse and wicked life, trusting to some pious practice in honor of the Blessed Virgin or any saint, or to kind acts done to the poor, or to any other device, will find that this has only added to his deep damnation. To use good deeds as hypnotics to compose us in our sin is a superstition worthy of idiots or of demons. If there are Catholics who are so senseless or so depraved they are unknown to me. In any event, devotion to the Blessed Virgin has most certainly no tendency to foster such a moral habit. She is presented to us by the Church as the ideal of pu-

rity and sinlessness; and to love and honor her is to love and honor all virtue. "Carnal minds will," as Dr. Newman says, "ever create a carnal worship for themselves; and to forbid them the service of the saints will have no tendency to teach them the worship of God."

Evil minds change good to their own nature. It is not necessary to pray to the Blessed Virgin or the saints to be guilty of the superstition of which Hallam speaks. The deist or the Protestant may form for himself a false conscience just as easily, to say the least, as the Catholic. He may persuade himself, for instance, that if he is not a murderer, or an adulterer, or a thief God will not be rigorous with him on other matters, and so deaden his sense of many and serious transgressions by keeping in mind his pharisaic virtues. Or the Protestant may lay to heart Luther's advice: "Sin bravely, but believe more bravely still." He may then lead the most disorderly life and feel perfectly safe in his sin, without having to trust to a possible miraculous interference in his behalf. It is not necessary and it is not pleasant to insist upon this. I have taken Hallam, because he is one of the most favorable examples of the kind of criticism which the Church receives at the hands of Protestants. He honestly sought to maintain the character and dignity of an impartial historian; he was not a partisan, and he was superior to conscious prejudice; but he was a victim of the wretched and narrow spirit which does not permit Englishmen to be reason-

able when the Catholic Church is in question. The whole significance of the Catholic veneration for the Blessed Virgin he finds in these popular legends, the meaning of which he yet fails to catch. Was there ever a shallower criticism or a more pitiful failure to grasp a great and noble theme?

To take the most obvious view of the subject, what profound influence has not this new ideal of womanhood exercised upon the character and destiny of Christian women, and consequently of Christian society!

The Amazon was the perfect woman of paganism; and to this type the famous examples of Greece and Rome conform, as the Spartan mother and the mother of the Gracchi. The ideal was masculine rather than womanly, and so far false and without general effectiveness. Heroic and active courage is the virtue of men more than of women. Woman is abler to suffer and man to act; and hence meekness, patience, humility, modesty, faith, and love are the virtues which most become her, as courage, truth, and candor are the complements of manliness. Man trusts more to knowledge, woman to love. He is greater by the mind, she by the heart. He is the type of God's creative power and wisdom, she of His all-enduring love and mercy. He, by nature, is more pagan, she more Christian; and St. Ambrose teaches that her fault was less in the original fall, as her bearing was beyond dispute the more generous. Hence God chose a woman to

bear to man the Christ; and having once given Him to us through her, says Bossuet, this order remains for ever and for all. As a mother's love brought Christ into the world, so they who love Him are taught by a mother's heart. What a noble part in Christian history does not woman play, from the pure and spotless Mary to that other one, all sin defiled, whose burning tears of love washed her guilt away!

The whole life of our Blessed Lord is attended by the ministries of holy women. Their love holds them true in His hour of agony, when men had fled away and God Himself had seemed to forsake His Son; and that same love reveals Him first to woman's eyes in His risen and immortal life. In that awful struggle in which for centuries it was contended whether love and faith or force and knowledge are the stronger, women crowded the bloody arena and bore fearless and triumphant the martyr's palm; and in the final victory, when the cross was advanced high up above all earthly dignities, St. Helena led the way for Constantine. Could anything be more touching or beautiful than the characters of St. Agnes and St. Cæcilia—so pure, so innocent, so gentle, so unconscious in their invincible strength? Who has ever suffered with more patient and enduring fortitude than St. Blandina, the martyr servant-girl of Lyons? St. Perpetua was torn by the horns of a wild bull, and her last movement when she had been thrown upon the ground was to draw together her dress—her perfect purity tri-

umphing over the agony of the most frightful death. St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and St. Gregory Nazianzen owed the depth of their religious faith and character to the example and teaching of holy women. And who can ever forget the faithful band of Roman matrons who gathered about St. Jerome, and whose names he has made immortal? Paula above all, who to a fortitude of soul worthy of her Æmilian blood added the tenderest and sweetest graces of Christian character, remains for ever the perfect type of a true and noble woman.

In giving to chastity a new value the Church gave to woman a higher power and a new mission. Purity of mind and conduct is not only her crown and glory ; it is also her strength and sure defence. Whatever heightens the delicacy of the sacred feeling of modesty fortifies morality and surrounds woman with a sanctity more inviolable than any legal enactments. King Arthur made his knights lay their hands in his and swear

“ To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her ; for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.”

It is impossible to believe that virginity is a

Godlike virtue without at once thinking more worthily of woman. Sensuality and love, though mysteriously related, are contrary as religion and superstition. The baser passion grows upon the grave of the finer virtue. Woman, like religion, appeals to what is highest in man. Her power over him is that of sentiment, and to seek to place her in rivalry with him in the rude business of life is an aim worthy of an atheistic and material age.

“ For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse; could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain ; his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.”

When I hear a woman use intellectual arguments I am dismayed. Her best reason, as it is the world’s best, is the inspiration of a pure and believing heart. She is happiest when she devotes herself, obedient to her patient and unselfish nature, to some loved being or high cause; and glory itself, says Madame de Staël, would be for her only a splendid mourning-suit for happiness denied.

Our Blessed Lord has dwelt with most emphasis upon virtues which are, above all, womanly —purity, meekness, obedience, faith, and love. Blessed are the clean in heart; blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are the meek; blessed are the merciful. And when He speaks of courage and strength it is not of the human sort, but of that which comes of humble, loving trust in God.

"Let not your heart be troubled," He said. "You believe in God, believe also in me." He does not exalt intellect, and enterprise, and heroic daring, but gentleness, and lovingness, and sweet chastity. The strong will always be bold and eager. They will protect themselves. He clothed the weak in heavenly panoply when He placed purity above strength and humility above pride. Now, of this true womanly phase of Christianity the Blessed Virgin is for ever the ideal. Mother and Virgin, she is the model of the wedded and the free; and, like all best things, she is near to the level of our common nature. She is no fine lady; she is no worldly queen. The peasant mother toiling beneath her thatched roof knows such was Mary's lot.

"A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
 Makes that and the action fine."

She makes us content with quiet virtue, with common life and familiar things. They are the best, and they are near to all. God's Mother sat by her spinning-wheel, and angels watched near her.

Of the higher life of perfect purity she is equally the model. The moment virginity is preached as a virtue women will be found to embrace it, all the more gladly because it is possible only through self-denial. And woman, without father or mother, or brother or sister, loving Christ only,

and the children whom He loved, and the poor and the sick, is the heavenliest image of God's charity and tender mercy that walks the earth. "Whatsoever ye have done to one of these," He said, "ye have done to me." And nearly always it is a woman's hand that ministers to Christ. How poorly inspired was Protestantism! It knew not woman's nature. How could it when it mistook human nature? Controversies, arguings, doubts, schisms, and sects give no joy to woman. She yearns for a certain faith to lean upon, and a great and holy cause to which she may give herself. Protestantism has never won her heart.

"There is," says Mr. Lecky, "as I conceive, no fact in modern history more deeply to be deplored than that the Reformers, who in matters of doctrinal innovations were often so timid, should have levelled to the dust, instead of attempting to regenerate, the whole conventional system of Catholicism." This great revolution was occasioned by the sins of Catholics, from the popes downward. It finally settled upon Bible-texts, became an intellectual process, and was condemned to the sterility which characterizes mere theories, of whatever kind. All of its phases are stages in the disintegration of Christianity which is taking place outside the Catholic Church, one of which is known as the question of woman's rights. The aim is to make woman as strong and intellectual as man, and the result must be to make her profane and vulgar. For her, above all, the

question of right lies in the fulfilment of duty. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul speaks of the glory of the woman as of a thing distinct from the glory of the man. Their endowments are unlike; their work is different; their provinces are separate. If she ape the man she will lose the heart of love, and yet not gain the commanding mind. The women who speak from our public platforms are so sharp and unlovely because they are displeased with themselves. To live in the hearts of those who make the laws is more than to have a vote. And if we must take a gloomy view, I, for one, agree with Madame de Staël, the most intellectual of women. "It were far better," she says, "in order to keep something sacred on earth, that in marriage there should be one slave rather than two free-thinkers."

In any case, whatever increases the real influence of woman will give greater power to religion and to the Catholic Church; and I believe that she will extend her sway only by walking in the pathway which has been opened to her by Jesus Christ, whose immaculate Mother remains for ever the glory and the ideal of all women.

IX.

CATHOLIC CHARITY.*

WE are a querulous race, ever ready to make complaint, skilled in fault-finding, and taking, it would seem, a kind of delight in discontent; and the fact that we are satisfied neither with ourselves nor with others serves, doubtless, a good purpose. The spirit of discontent drives us to act when but for it we should lie upon the bed of indolence while the blind forces of nature buried our higher faculties beneath the weight of matter. That we are unable to find repose even in enjoyment and the company of friends is a proof of God's love for us. He will have us restless until we seek and find rest in Him. Feverish activity, however, and despondent or unloving fault-finding come of disease, and hence, as commonly found in the world, are evil. For several years now the air is filled with our groanings and objurgations. Through all the organs that convey public opinion to us we catch the tones of an angry, sullen voice: the days are dark, morality is dying out, honesty is passing away,

* Delivered in Peoria, September, 1878, for the benefit of the plague-stricken people of Memphis, and when the depression caused by the financial panic of 1873 had not yet passed away.

the government is corrupt, public spirit is losing force, the rich are without a heart and the poor without hope. And as gloomy thoughts bring dark forebodings, there are prophets of evil in the land who foretell still greater misfortunes. Is it not wise, in such a mood, to pause and ask ourselves whether we do not exaggerate our troubles and sorrows? Is there not a soul of goodness in things evil, and has not adversity its sweet uses? The privations and hardships of the last few years have taught us prudence and frugality; the government, if we consider our altered circumstances, is probably not more corrupt than in times past; and honesty and morality are not about to disappear. In a society like ours evil is clamorous and noisy, and scandals are lifted out of the sewers in which they belong, and held, with all their reeking filth, before the public gaze. But the sin that is unseen is not therefore less evil or dangerous. The rich here in America are not heartless, and the poor are not going to turn communists. Only the blind or those who are unfriendly to our ~~free~~ institutions can believe that socialism is a serious menace to our future prosperity. De Tocqueville pointed out long ago the necessary antagonism that exists between democracy, as constituted in the United States, and communism. Both are based upon the idea of the substantial equality of men; but democracy strives to give to the individual the fullest liberty compatible with duty and the rights of others, while communism sac-

rifices individual rights to an omnipotent state. If a man who predicts can be wise there is no great risk in affirming that the insane social theories which are the morbid product of the peculiar condition of certain European centres will be rejected, without second thought, by the common sense and practical mental habits of the American people. If we will but look with our own eyes and see things as they are there is little danger of our becoming the victims of despondency.

What more hopeful sign could there be than the spectacle which this country presents to our view at the present moment? Thirteen years ago what seemed to be an impassable abyss separated the North from the South. It was filled with blood; and on either side for a thousand miles stood armed men, resolved to win or die. Countless mothers, North and South, still bear in their hearts ever-open wounds, bleeding for sons who went down in that awful sea of human gore. In innumerable homes the vacant chair still speaks of him who went forth in that dark and angry day and never returned. The sorrow lives and in our generation will not die, but there is no bitterness, there is no hate. Here and there some politician, hoping to gain a brief authority, appeals to these vulgar passions. But his motive is transparent. Even he feels no bitterness and nourishes no hate. And now for several weeks the very winds that blow from this Southern land come to us laden with the groans of the dying and the wailings of

those who bemoan their children and will not be comforted because they are not. Cities and towns are desolate, and the very waysides are strewn with the dying, whom insatiate Death still pursues as they seek to flee their cruel fate. But I will not dwell upon a scene which each day is renewed almost beneath our eyes. I need to make no appeal to your feelings, but wish merely to call your attention to what I consider a most auspicious omen.

The first cry of distress from the South has awakened a thrill of helpful sympathy throughout the entire North. Their calamity is that of the whole country; their affliction throws over the whole land a gloom. They are our countrymen, our brothers; we are saddened by their grief, and henceforth it shall be an infamy for any man to seek to sow discord among brethren.

In the mysterious ways of God this great sorrow may find its justification in this sublime manifestation of love. A people capable of rising so nobly above all meaner passions is certainly not lost to virtue and morality. We have, beyond doubt, our faults and shortcomings; in weak and mortal man great liberty is inseparable from great evils; but God has so made us that with freedom and faith in Him we can endure all things.

Benevolence is not only universally admitted to be a virtue, but it is of all others the virtue which most infallibly wins our good-will. Persevering and successful industry, great courage, a strong sense of justice, true piety, often expose their

possessors to the envy and ill-will of their fellow-men. But benevolence disarms every evil passion. The man who is merciful and kind, whose hand is open to the poor, whose heart goes out in sympathy to all who suffer, whose dearest and nearest thoughts are busy seeking some way to make the wretched happy—this man, the friend of men, silences envy, and the universal voice proclaims his worth and goodness. He may belong to a despised race or an unpopular religion; this is forgotten, and we recognize in him only the supremacy of virtue and the transcendent beauty of a loving and unselfish nature. Since benevolence is so amiable a virtue—having, like mercy, a double blessing, bringing joy to its possessor and help and happiness to his fellows—we should naturally think that it would be also a common virtue. It is within the reach of the poorest, and in the humbler walks of life its beauty takes a more celestial hue. It is a great element in human happiness, and we all, however different in other respects, are alike in this, that we necessarily seek our own happiness; and hence one who should forget the history of mankind, and think only of the nature of this virtue, would be led to infer that men would, even from selfish motives, be kind to one another, and that benevolence would be the very atmosphere in which the race had lived.

But no view of human life could be more unfounded when we come to consider the facts of our history. Everywhere man is the enemy of

man. No beast of prey has so devoured its own species as man. From the lowest savage up to the highest civilization of Greece and Rome one law is everywhere observable, and it is pitiless, blind, and unreasoning as the laws of nature. The weak, the poor, and the ignorant have no rights, because there is no mercy and no charity. The world belongs to the strong ; the human race lives for the few. Warfare is the chief business of men ; and not war as it is now waged, but the stern, bloodthirsty, cruel god whose only battle-cry is *væ victis*—woe to the conquered—butchering his prisoners, dragging his captives into slavery and shame, raging with torch and sword, striking down the tender and the innocent, as though maddened by some fell purpose of hell for the universal slaughter and destruction of the world. The hero, the saint even, is the war-captain, the mighty destroyer of men. Achilles and Hector are the ideals of manhood as created by the most polished of pagan peoples ; and what are they but great bullies full of animal courage and blood-thirsty revenge ? At the barriers of the Grecian fleet, when the battle hung in doubt, Hector, calling on his warriors with defiant shout, uplifted a huge stone, such as no two men, mightiest of a land, could heave, and hurled it against the close-jointed, solid gates, burst the hinges, shivered all their planks, and leaped into the breach, gloomy as night in aspect, but in arms all dazzling. And when at length the Trojan hero falls beneath Achilles' spear how brutally he exults

over his prostrate foe! He binds his dead body to his chariot, and raising aloft his arms, distilling blood, smites his steeds, and in the sight of Priam, with the fury of hell, drags dishonored Hector around the walls of Troy. Ulysses, the wise and good, who had drunk delight of battle on the windy plains of Troy, lands, in his wanderings, on the Thracian coasts, and, finding a city, proceeds without a thought to sack it and butcher its inhabitants.

Nor are these the ideals of poets only. They are approved and accepted by philosophers as well. Plato congratulates the Athenians for having shown beyond all other Greeks, in their relations with Persia, a heartfelt hatred of foreigners; and he, the noblest and most spiritual mind of paganism, would have introduced into his ideal republic community of women and infanticide, while he held that contempt for slaves is the mark of a gentleman. Aristotle, the most comprehensive of Greek philosophers, elaborated a theory of slavery, in which he maintains that it is indispensable to every rightly-ordered state, and that there can be no wrong in it, since the greater part of mankind are fit only for servitude, and nature, which furnishes us with domestic animals, provides us with slaves. And in his system the rights of the master are as absolute as those of the artisan over his tools. To this fate Aristotle, and, in his opinion, nature itself, condemns the whole human race, with the comparatively insignificant exception of the inhabitants of the Grecian states.

In Rome similar views prevailed, and were made harsher by the sterner character of its people. In that vast and teeming centre of humanity there was not, when Christ was born, a single asylum for the relief of human wretchedness. There was no pity, no mercy, no charity there. Seneca, in making mention of its population of beggars, says, "We give unwillingly to such people"; and Quintilian asks how it is possible not to repel the poor. Virgil, in the beautiful passage where he describes the happiness of the wise man, counts as one of his virtues indifference to the miseries of the unfortunate, and Horace proclaims his hatred of the crowd of men.

It is impossible for us, who are the children of eighteen hundred years of Christian influences, to realize the hopelessness of the condition of the poor in pagan society. To do this we should be able to place ourselves in the midst of the ancient world, and to contemplate the abject state to which mankind had been brought—a state so full of misery and despair that nothing short of the appearance of God Himself in poverty and sorrow could have inspired the courage even to hope for a brighter future.

As we descend from the Greek to the savage we find at each step the reign of hatred and violence. The stronger tribes prey upon the weaker, and turn to hunt the beasts of the forest only when the human animal has been killed or driven away. Captives are put to death, or live as slaves and instruments of debauch. In the languages

of some of these tribes no word is found to express the idea of love. The Hottentots, travellers tell us, seem to have not the faintest sentiment of human sympathy; and the Kaffirs have no feeling of love even in marriage. There are writers who maintain that when the present territory of the United States was first discovered by Europeans the aboriginal population was not greater than at present. Why was this vast and fertile continent almost uninhabited? The cruelty of man made it fatal to human life.

Except under the influence of Christianity no people has ever reached a higher conception of man than the national or tribal. In Greece and Rome the fellow-man is the citizen. All others are barbarians and slaves. In India he is a member of a caste, and to hold relations with others is defilement. Amongst savages he is one of a tribe, and all others are natural enemies. Even the Jews, whose laws are more favorable to the poor than those of other ancient nations, rose to no higher conception of the fellow-man than the national. Their common descent was ever present to their minds, and to have claim upon their sympathy it was necessary to be a child of Abraham. The command to love one's neighbor as one's self was given, it is true, but its historical development is summed up in the words of our Lord: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy"; and the gentile—that is, all the rest of mankind—was regarded as the enemy both of Jewish nationality and Jewish religion.

Only Christ the Saviour is able to create the synthesis of the neighbor and the enemy. He is the God-Man, and in Him extremes meet and are transformed—love and hate, purity and sin, faith and knowledge, spirit and matter. In His presence the divisions and antagonisms that embitter and poison life die away. He is not the Saviour of the Jew or the gentile, of the Greek or the barbarian, of the freeman or the slave, but of man simply. The love and mercy which bowed the heavens and brought Him down was wide and deep as humanity. In heaven is the Father of all, and on earth all men are brothers. This, indeed, is divine truth; but to teach high doctrines and pure morality is little, if the power to make them a part of human life be wanting. What is this power, this soul of truth, that makes it living, this grace of Christ that is to recreate the heart of man?

It is His love. He is God's love for man, entwining itself around and through all the fibres of his being so closely that henceforth for ever He who is God is also man. Love alone is the price of love; and as Christ brings nothing but infinite love, He asks for nothing but love. They who come to Him must love him more than father or mother or friends, or home or country, or riches or pleasure, or fame or power or life. They must hold it a privilege to take up His yoke, to bear His cross, to suffer hunger, cold, poverty, shame, and death for Him. As things the most beautiful and pleasant lose all their charm and seem to

mock us when the one we loved is dead, so must the world be as the dust beneath their feet to those who love Jesus Christ. That He should have demanded such love is most strange, and, were it not divine wisdom, would have been infinite folly. That He should have received it is of all miracles the most overwhelming and incontrovertible. Above all men Christ has been, is, and for ever must be loved. How marvellous is it not that those who in our day have undertaken to disprove His divinity should have ended by worshipping His humanity! To draw near to Him even in thought is to feel the unwonted fire of a new love. For eighteen hundred years what countless souls—the purest, the sweetest, the most loving—have lived only for Him and in His presence, offering up to Him father and mother, and home and country, and every fair illusion that gives charm to life! How many in life-long self-immolation have found that with this love agony itself may become sweet and peaceful as the joy of heaven! Like a mother's love, like the highest love of friends, this love of Christ attains to the sublimity of folly and performs deeds in the presence of which mere reason stultifies itself. In vain the worldling sneers and is incredulous. The fair daughter who is growing by his side to crown his days with gladness and beauty will open his eyes with the spear that pierced the heart of Jesus. Entreaties, tears, threats, and grievous anger will be powerless. In some silent cloister, under some coarse garb,

she will renounce wealth and pleasure and liberty, that she may live hidden with Christ in God. The love of Jesus is not a fancy, not a dream. If the solid earth is real, it is real. The mother may forget her child, the lover his well-beloved, but the children of men will never cease to be drawn to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He asked for this love; it is, I may say, the only thing for which He asks, for in it all else is contained. He foresaw that it would be given to Him; that it would burn through the long night of ages, through ice-begirt mountains and the chilled waste of waters of the all embracing ocean; that in every country and in all future time the most generous and loving natures would turn to Him as the eye seeks the light. That he should have asked this love is most strange; that He should have received it is divine—the central and all-important fact in the history of the human race for now well-nigh two thousand years.

What will the Son of Man do with this love? Into what channel will He turn the highest and purest devotion of which human nature is capable? He will have us love Him, doubtless, because He is the best, the worthiest object of our love; but to what practical test and use will He put the exalted and boundless devotion of His followers? He will take our hearts and give them to all who suffer and are weary and heavy-laden. The sinner, the beggar, the leper, the slave, are the brothers of Jesus, and whatsoever we do for them is proof of our love for Him. His works

are deeds of mercy, done in behalf of the blind, the dumb, the halt, or to console a weeping mother, or to give joy to the hearts of sisters who mourn beside a brother's grave.

To the messengers of John, who asked whether He was the Christ, he made answer that He preached the Gospel to the poor. To them no one had ever preached. Eloquence was for citizens and the lovers of philosophy; but no one spoke to God's people, who suffer and toil, and are ignorant and sorely pressed. "Blessed are the poor," said Christ, and His words have created a new life for the human race. Poverty had been a curse; henceforth it may become a blessing. If we hope to have part in the kingdom of Christ we must feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, ransom the captive, and visit the sick. Wherever a human being is in suffering and in want, there is Christ to be served and to be loved; and the more we love Him the more clearly shall we see that the nature which He honored can never sink so low as to be unworthy of our sympathy. Here is the religion of which the prophets had dreamed, for which the fathers had sighed; the worship of God, founded in purity of heart and the love of man; a spiritual and Catholic faith, without idol, without country; the religion of the human race and for ever.

When the Heart of Jesus beat against the heart of humanity the infinite was revealed:

“ Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might ;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.”

A divine sympathy with human suffering and misery was born. For a time it almost seemed as though the love of Christ would change the fixed laws of social existence. There were no poor and no rich ; but they who believed had but one heart and a common property. St. Paul, whose fervid genius and irrepressible energy made him a natural combatant, became an alms-gatherer and travelled the world to plead for the poor. The wretched slave fleeing from his master found a warmer welcome than if he had been a king. He pressed him to his heart, and told him of the love which had bowed the heavens and sunk to the low infamy of the cross, that no man might longer doubt that God’s mercy is above all His works. He sent him back to Philemon with the writing : “ Receive Onesimus, now no longer a slave, but a most dear brother.”

Through humanity there ran a mighty current of love, turned back from the sensual to the spiritual, from self to others—from man rich, or beautiful, or great to man simply as the child of God, the brother of Jesus Christ, and of His blood redeemed. The Blessed Saviour, meek and humble, takes a tone of divine indignation when He rebukes the heartlessness of a hypocritical race who, in the name of formalisms, trampled upon the sinful and the poor. The apostles, too, catch

this holy accent: "Has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to those that love Him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you and drag you before the judgment-seat? Do they not blaspheme the sacred name by which ye are called?"

When St. Lawrence was commanded to deliver up the treasures of the Church he came with the beggars of the city, saying: "These are the jewels and precious stones for which you ask." St. Ambrose, who stood at his cathedral door and forbade Theodosius to enter until he had repented of his cruelty to the people, declared that the goods of the Church belonged to the poor.

Poverty is the wedded bride of Christ, and the poor are His children. In the middle ages it was the devotion of the Church to the people which gave to her worldly power.

"The friendship of the poor," said St. Bernard, "makes kings our friends, but the love of poverty makes us kings."

Man is sacred. In each sufferer, in each poor despairing sinner, the Christ is, the crucified, appealing to all who have hearts; and thus is constituted the free service of humanity, in which the race takes the place of the family for innumerable men and women who give their lives to the care of the ignorant, the weak, the afflicted, and the friendless.

There are in our day innumerable persons who are ready to acknowledge the incalculable services

which the Christian religion has rendered to the cause of humanity, but who think that its aid is now no longer needed. Ties of nature and interest, they say, bind man to man, and the spirit of charity grows with the progress of culture and education. As men become more enlightened they become more merciful, and universal education will create universal good-will. Culture, by bringing out into full and conscious life all the endowments of man, will develop the perfect Humanity, which is so beautiful that it will compel worship, and so the final and absolute religion will come into existence. This is the ideal, this the end, to which the race is tending ; and Christianity, which was once a stepping-stone, is now but a fragment that blocks the way.

What truth there may be in notions of this kind it is not difficult to discern. The character of an individual or a people, as of an age, is in part, no doubt, the result of culture and education, and it is the tendency of civilization to make men sensitive of suffering, whether in themselves or in others. But we may shrink from the thought of pain, and yet feel no love for the poor or desire to help them. In fact, the sensitiveness peculiar to the highly-wrought, nervous organizations of refined and cultivated people tends to create rather a selfish and heartless type of character. Culture, like wealth, raises a wall between the so-called privileged classes and the poor, through which currents of sympathy pass with difficulty, if at all. To cultivate the mind is to isolate one's

self from the crowd of even intelligent people. The finest scholar, if he do not love Jesus Christ, is farthest removed from love of the masses of men. He neither loves them nor wants their love. John Stuart Mill, whose nature was generous, and who, in craving for an object of worship, had, like Comte, put humanity in the place of God, died saddened almost to despair by the feeling that the people are too low and brutish to inspire hope of a better future. And what harsh, unfeeling contempt for man pervades the *Reminiscences* of Carlyle! Both he and Mill, who knew not God and His Christ, felt that it was impossible to love man, and in the gloom that gathered round them they sought distraction in wild lamentations over the phantoms of dead women. Renan, who belongs to a different school of unbelief, is sublime in his serene contempt for the crowd of men. To the fate of individuals he is as calmly indifferent as Nature herself. That millions are ignorant of the truth is, he thinks, of no consequence, provided it is seen and adored by the aristocracy of intellect. He does not like the ancient régime, because it put men of culture to inconvenience; but democracy is equally distasteful to him, and for the same reason. The race exists, he thinks, that great men may be produced; and the common herd is not worth a thought, any more than an animal, which, could it know what end it serves, ought to think its happiness complete when it is eaten by a man of genius. The future, he says, is not bright; but must we not think that truth

itself is sad, and that the most awful moment in the life of a planet is that in which science finally succeeds in tearing away the veil which hides from man the unreality of all his hopes? This pessimism, however, is mild when compared with the teaching of Schopenhauer, who represents still another phase of infidel thought. All contact with men is, in his view, defilement; and a philosopher should dwell like a Brahmin among Sudras and Pariahs. It would have been better, he declares, had the Cosmos never existed, since it is worse than no universe at all; and the best use to which conscious life can be put is to bring about the extinction of the species by abstinence from its further propagation.

Strauss, who is an infidel of a widely different type, assuming that Christianity is no longer vital, proclaims the new revelation in the following imperative style: "Ever remember that thou art human, not merely a natural production; ever remember that all others are human also, and, with all individual differences, the same as thyself, having the same needs and claims. This is the sum and substance of morality.

"Ever remember that thou, and everything thou beholdest within and around thee, all that befalls thee and others, is no disjointed fragment, no wild chaos of atoms or casualties, but that it all springs, according to eternal laws, from the one primal source of all life, all reason, and all good. This is the essence of religion."

A more impotent morality, a more lifeless religion, could not well be imagined.

In spite of the contrary assertion one feels that in this revelation of science man is only a natural product, a sarcoidus, peripatetic fungus; that there are no other than natural products; that all things are ground out and reabsorbed by eternal laws, blind, mechanic, and Godless. And yet, in the fearful loneliness, as of a silenced battlefield, of modern atheism, Carlyle can hear no voice of hope except in Germany, where, in feeble, stammering and inarticulate efforts at speech, he thinks he catches sounds that promise a new revelation of the Godlike. Could the old faith die, with it would perish all hope of a divine and life-giving belief for mankind.

But it is not necessary to go so far to show how unreal and empty is the religion of humanity as taught by those who have denied Christ.

The creed of fraternity is based upon the assumption that men in general, even the poor and degraded, are in themselves, without supposing them to stand in any relation with God and a higher life, lovable and capable of inspiring devotion. But this sentimental faith will not bear the test of contact with humanity.

We do not naturally love all men, for we cannot love that which is unlovely. Human love, except it spring from the parental instinct or benefits received, has but one cause—beauty, whether of mind, or soul, or body. Physical beauty, the charm of which is felt by the greatest number, is

rare, and its power is comparatively harmless because it exists only in transition. Between night and day it vanishes. Its brightness, like innocence, is dimmed by a breath.

“A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
Lost, faded, broken, dead within an hour.”

The degraded, the wretched, the old, the deformed, have not this dower, and hence whenever human society has been left free to form itself, without the intervention of supernatural beliefs and motives, men have felt no sympathy with the coarse and ignorant crowd; and there is little risk in affirming that nothing short of the clearest revelation and a divine example, imposing the most solemn duties and creating a more than human enthusiasm, could ever induce any considerable number of people to care for the masses of their fellow-men. There are few persons whom we naturally love or whose love we care to have, and these are not paupers and criminals.

It will be found in general that they who worship an ideal humanity despise the human race; and their conduct is logical, for the race as it is cannot be made an object of worship. What motive can a mere philanthropist have for enthusiasm?

Making every allowance for difference of temperament, no reasonable man, taking human life as complete in this world, can look upon it with any great satisfaction, however surrounded or attended.

If society could be so organized that every one should sit around his own fireside in peace and plenty, with nothing to do but to cultivate himself and others, life would be hardly more satisfactory than at present; for it is impossible to contemplate human existence, if this world is all, with enthusiasm, because we are chilled by the ever-present shadow of death.

We may perhaps imagine a kind-hearted man of wealth devoting his life and riches to gathering large herds of cattle of the gentlest breeds, placing them in rich pastures in shady woodlands through which fresh waters flow, and finding his reward in contemplating the easy existence he has procured for these animals.

Not substantially different is the aim of those who, looking upon man as only the highest animal, born and dying in this world, having no future as he had no past, are eager in every way to provide for this animal rich pastures by shady streams, furnishing him at the same time with the means of cultivating his intellectual and æsthetic tastes.

Why should we, if there is no God and no Christ, love all men? Are the interests of all identical? Are we brothers? Are we even cousins? Is not our relationship with the bat and the owl as real as the tie which binds us to the Calmuck or the Hottentot? Are not all things the product of the same blind and fatal law? Does Nature teach us pity? Is it not her unmistakable lesson that the world exists for the strong?

Does she not with iron and remorseless grip crush the weak? If Nature is the highest why should we seek to place ourselves above her? If she is merciless why should we be weakly tender-hearted? Was not the old pagan right who refused to help the poor because he thought it a bootless task to seek to prolong a miserable life?

The growth of society, the cosmic philosophy teaches, is like that of an animal or a plant, and proceeds according to fixed and necessary laws. Benevolent interferences with its movement can only impede the real progress of the race. The reformer and the philanthropist are morbid products, not less hurtful than the tyrant and the fanatic. The poor and the weak are those who violate the laws of nature. Nature eliminates them, and it would be impious and unwise to attempt to thwart her sacred rule.

The plague spreads death and mourning through the South because the people have neglected the laws of health. Nature is trying to teach them wisdom, but probably in vain. In the meanwhile the North, in which Nature is more truly worshipped, is called on to make sacrifices for the sins of these Southerners.

Why, then, let us ask again, if there is no God and no Christ, should we love all men?

With the ways, the hopes and fears of most of them we have no sympathy. Their world is not our world; their thoughts and loves are not ours.

It may be well enough to exalt the people in meaningless phrase; to declare their voice the

voice of God, and their will the highest law ; but in sober truth the people are ignorant, they are coarse, they are sensual—they are a motley crew.

“ *However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.*”

And though we be related through Adam or some choice specimen of the quadruped, why should this make us love one another when we are neither beautiful nor lovely?

These sentiments spring spontaneously from the principles of those who, having no faith in God or His Christ, look upon men as they are ; and in point of fact these sentiments have shaped human conduct wherever it has been deprived of the aid of supernatural religion. The history of heathenism, in the past as in the present, is marked by contempt for man. This was the history of Egypt, of Greece, and of Rome ; this is still the history of Africa, of India, and of China.

If in Christian nations, after long struggles and fierce conflicts, a partially different order of social existence has been brought about, we owe it to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of man.

In Him is the highest life, human and divine, which has appeared on earth, and He remains for ever the purest light and love of the human race. At His approach a new world springs into being. In His presence man is transfigured. The hideousness of sin and deformity is forgotten, and the child of God, the brother of Jesus, is revealed, to be served, to be loved. “ *Come to me,*” said He, “ *all ye who labor and are sorely burdened,*

and I will give you refreshment." And His words have a creative power. Throughout the world, for all future time, the ministry of suffering and sorrow exists. "Blessed are the poor," "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness"; and henceforth the holiest and noblest hearts give themselves to the service of those who mourn that they may be comforted.

Still, indeed, there is sorrow in the world and suffering, at the beginning of life and at the end; and our pathway across the earth is wet with tears and blood. For countless ages the race has toiled and labored and made progress, and to-day, as in the beginning, poverty and sin and death are the inheritance of the children of men; and so must it be until the end. From the earthly paradise man has been driven; the gates are barred; and Satan may as well hope to re-enter heaven as we to re-create the home which sin destroyed. But God has not left us without hope: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Even here the pure of heart are secure and the meek and humble have peace. They who have known Jesus cannot despair, either of themselves or of mankind. There is in Him a godlike hopefulness and trustfulness, and whoever draws near to Him has confidence. In death there is life, and from the grave immortal resurrection. He that believes in Him has life everlasting. In the tomb of Christ the old world is buried; from it issues forth the new. He rises from the dead to rule for ever with imperial and

godlike sway. Even the unbeliever confesses His power and the unequalled beauty and charm of His divine life. The fulness of that power no man can ever realize. Had He done nothing but give to us an ideal character His value would be infinite. He was Himself all that He wished His disciples to be; and His reproduction of Himself in them is His chief aim, as His success in this is His highest glory. He presented Himself to men as the greatest, the most important Being who had ever appeared on earth—the Son of the Eternal Father, and equal to Him. The moral character of all men was to be tested, and their final state decided by the conformity of their lives with His own; and this model was for all, and to the end of the world to remain unchanged. He takes up a position apart—one occupied by no other man, by no other founder of religion. In all history there is nothing that approaches it in sublimity and significance. *Omnia in omnibus Christus.*

The authority He claims is not greater than the force with which He moulds the minds and hearts of men. He has inspired a love from which has sprung a new race, the re-creators of the world; and it is because this love is renewed from generation to generation in the hearts of thousands that the Christian Church is indestructible.

What transformations of character does not this love effect? Look at Peter, as Christ found him, rough, ignorant, and impulsive, and then behold him when the love of the Master has entered his

soul. How subdued and chastened when the risen Lord says to him, "Feed my sheep"! With what power and wisdom does he not stand before the multitude on the day of Pentecost! With what completeness of character does he not appear at the healing of the man at the gate of the temple! How tender and yet how heroic when he is crucified, head to earth!

When for three centuries all who believed in Christ seemed smitten with a longing for death, asking no privilege so eagerly as martyrdom, this same love urged them. "Oh! that I may enjoy the fury of the beasts," cried Ignatius, turning his wistful thoughts to the still far-off Coliseum. "Oh! may they be quick to tear me, to crush me. May they be driven to devour my flesh, and not to crouch at my feet, as has happened to other martyrs! If they come not I will urge myself upon them. Pardon me these words, my children; I know what is good for me. Now only do I begin to be a disciple of Christ, desiring nothing of all that is seen on earth, that I may belong to Him alone. Come fire and cross and beasts, breaking of bones and dividing of members, and the crushing of my whole body, *tantum ut Christo fruar*—if only I may be with Christ." Ignatius is but one of a countless multitude to whom the love of Christ is all in all; more than life, stronger than death; on earth the best, in heaven the highest. And to love Jesus is to love the poor, the forsaken, those whom no one else will love.

O child of man, born to sorrow, come and follow through the ages and through the earth this incarnate love, this Bride of Christ. There is no misery so low but she will stoop to it, no being so fallen but she will have power to lift him up. She will unloose the chains of the slave; she will clothe woman with chastity, and place her by the side of man to crown his life with innocence and peace; the child she will press to her virginal mother's heart, filling its young soul with hopes and thoughts of heaven. For the homeless she will build homes, and asylums for sweet repentance and holy meditation. And when pestilence, which wealth has no power to bribe nor beauty to charm, falls on the land, she will walk among the sick and the dying, encircled with light

“ Such as the artist paints o'er the brows of saints and apostles,
Or such as hangs by night o'er a city seen at a distance.”

Nothing could be more unjust than the attempt to make this pure and merciful religion responsible for the wrongs and cruelties which have from time to time been committed in the midst of Christian populations. God Himself has not seen fit to wholly tame the savage that lurks in each human breast; and during the long course of eighteen hundred years the Church, in her efforts to elevate and enlighten the barbarous peoples to whom love had drawn her, may have seemed at times to lose something of the meekness and sweet reasonableness of Christ; but a deeper view will show that she has been and is a never-fail-

ing fount of equity, forbearance, and charity, and that she has always leaned, even in fierce and cruel ages, to the side of mercy.

“O my friends,” says Carlyle, “when we view the fair, clustering flowers that overwreathe, for example, the marriage bower and encircle man’s life with the fragrance and hues of heaven, what hand will not smite the foul plunderer that grubs them up by the roots, and with grinning, grunting satisfaction shows us the dung they flourish in?”

And may we not with equal horror turn from those who, in the presence of Christ’s pure and beneficent religion, can think only of persecutions, wars, and massacres? These are the deeds of men who had nothing of Christ except the name of Christian; and as sin does not make God evil, scandals do not corrupt His religion. Love, not hate; peace, not strife; serviceableness, not wrong-doing, are her children; and they scatter through the earth, like flowers,

“The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless.”

X.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHRISTIANITY is the life and work of Jesus Christ. He fills the world. The centuries bear His name, and all the generations of men that move forward and upward bow to Him as they pass on into eternity. He overcomes. From age to age the boundaries of His empire are enlarged. Beyond the mountains and the rivers and the seas He passes, makes His own the tongues of all men, and wins victory with the weapons that are turned against Him. He reigns. His throne is in the soul of man, imperishable, built upon the central seat of power, where God Himself is known and loved. The intellect will criticise, the heart be led captive by the senses, but they who have once stood face to face with Jesus are His for evermore or are self-condemned. He is light and love and truth, or there is no light and love and truth. "And I am with you," he said, "until the ages fail." To be, for Him, is to be for ever. This truth all Christians, I suppose, agree in confessing. Christ is not an idea but a historical person, and His religion is not a theory but a fact; not a doctrine, primarily

at least, but a new life, manifesting itself in time and space through an organism of its own. It is not, consequently, what each man thinks it to be, but it is what the facts of its history show it to be. It is the fulfilment of the divine promise, the accomplishment of the prophecies, the realization of the hope which was the life of Israel. It is the kingdom of heaven, established in the world and in the hearts of men, but unworldly and superhuman.

Were Christianity merely an idea, a system of doctrines, seeking control of the will through the intellect, its fate could hardly be different from that of other philosophies. The vital alone can sway the living, and those who have sought to shift the groundwork of Christian faith from its historical basis to the sphere of opinion, thereby reducing it to the level of a philosophy, have invariably weakened or destroyed its influence.

Facts, of course, are inseparable from ideas, and in the religion of Christ there is a wealth and depth of thought which gives to it an intellectual excellence higher than that of all philosophies; but its doctrines flow from its history. It enters the world as life and truth, and is not only prior to all theories concerning its nature and meaning, but is more than any possible theory. Hence criticism cannot destroy it any more than it can destroy human life or nature itself, because it has an essence and efficacy which are above the intellect and elude its grasp.

Christianity, then, is a historical religion, and its

central and essential fact is Jesus Christ. From Him, and through Him, and around Him it rises in the world, grows, organizes itself, takes possession of the earth, and endures throughout all ages. It is a misconception when we speak of the doctrines of Christ as though they were separable from Himself and His work. His teachings are part of His life, and those who do not know Him necessarily mistake His doctrines.

Natural religion exists only in books or thoughts; but the religion of Christ is positive and objective, having a definite organism and a connected history. Now, this organism in which Christ abides and works in the world, and through which His religion becomes historical, is the Church, which, consequently, is the Christian religion in its objective form. This is the truth which it is my present purpose to develop and enforce.

The life of Christ has been traced for us in authentic records, whether or not inspired it does not concern us here to make inquiry. It is enough for us to know that they are true and genuine, and as such received even by the enemies of the Christian faith. From this history we learn that when Christ entered upon the work of founding His religion He called about Him a body of men, to whom He gave a distinctive name and a corporate mission. A man, He took men as His helpers in the work of saving mankind. The primary agent was divine, the end supernatural; but the means through which it was to be attained

were adapted to the nature and wants of man, and corresponded with the general methods of education. As man is social, the religion of Christ is social; as society rests upon authority and the duty of obedience, there is authority with the duty of obedience in the religion of Christ; as the authority of society is vested in individuals, individuals in the religion of Christ are clothed with His authority; as teaching is the universal means of education in natural society, teaching is a primary duty of the Church of Christ; as the bonds of union are common sentiments expressed in common symbols and observances, there are in the religion of Christ symbols and observances which both express and help to cause peace and love among those who believe in Him.

In the society of the apostles, whom he chose as helpers and co-workers, Christ spent the years in which He founded the kingdom of heaven. They followed Him in His journeyings; they heard His discourses; they were the witnesses of His miracles; and to them, as they were able to bear the knowledge, He disclosed more and more fully the mysteries of His religion. In their company He went about doing good, preaching the Gospel and healing the sick. To them He foretold His Passion and death; to them He appeared after His resurrection and at intervals during forty days, instructing them more thoroughly in the work to which He had called them; and in their presence He ascended into heaven, as He gave His final and supreme command, "All power is given to

me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." And they returned to Jerusalem, and first of all chose Matthias to take the place of Judas in the apostolic body and ministry, and then remained together, in obedience to the words of Christ, until they received the Holy Ghost and were "endued with power from on high," when Peter, standing with the eleven, preached to the multitude of the life and death and resurrection of Christ the Saviour. And about three thousand souls received his words and were baptized in that day, and continued "persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in communion of the breaking of bread, and in prayer." This is the brief summary of the establishment and first beginning of increase of the kingdom of Christ. Let us dwell for a moment upon its significance. There is here no philosophic system, no theory of religion, but a Divine Being bringing to men redemption from sin and clothing them with a new life. The Saviour appeals as little as possible to the critical faculty. He asks men to believe rather than to understand, and assumes that only those who lead the higher life can perceive the truth of God. When learned men seek to enter into argument with Him or propose difficulties He answers them carelessly, implying that controversy is not the

way to the kingdom of heaven. The all-sufficient test of the truth of His teaching is possessed by those only who lead His life.

Hence He chooses ignorant men as His apostles, and during the years in which He prepares them for their work He makes no effort to give them an intellectual training. If they keep His commandments, if they lead His life, the Spirit of God will dwell with them and they will be wise unto salvation. Supernatural truth is revealed to faith and love, and mere learning is no preparation for belief in Christ. He is not accompanied by philosophers or rich men. The humble, the meek, the pure in heart, the lovers of peace, the patient sufferers and they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, follow Him and are blessed. As Christ did not address Himself to the critical faculty, He is not a writer. He did not confide His teachings to a book, which, though it contain the word of God, is lifeless, but put them in the souls of men, to be propagated, like the race itself, from generation to generation. As He Himself wrote nothing, He did not command His apostles to write. He founded His Church upon them, and committed to it the doctrines and sacraments of His religion. He died, He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and left to the world not a syllable in writing. The Holy Ghost descended upon the Church; at the preaching of St. Peter three thousand believed and were baptized; St. Stephen died a martyr, St. Paul was converted, and the faith spread on every side, and

all the while not one word of the New Testament had been written. The Church was in the world, believing and teaching, praying and suffering, persecuted and triumphant; but the New Testament existed only in the mind and heart of the Church. The book itself was not at all, and did not come into existence until years after. The first Gospel, that of St. Matthew, was written five years after the ascension; the second, St. Mark's, about the same time; the third, St. Luke's, twenty-four years later, and St. John's Gospel only at the close of the first century of the Christian era. The Epistles were written at various times from the year 52 to the year 66, so that the date of the earliest of them is some fifteen years or more after our Lord's ascension.

The Christian religion, then, existed before the New Testament was written; it consequently is not derived from the Scripture and does not depend upon it. The apostles and disciples were members of the Church before they were writers of inspired truth, and they put in the Gospels and Epistles not a new revelation, but that which had been made by Christ, and by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and which was proclaimed by the voice of the Church before it was written by them. The command given to them was "to preach the Gospel to every creature," "to make disciples of all nations"; and this is what they at once proceeded to do, and only later did some of them take up the pen as an auxiliary in the divine work. Scripture, then, grew out of the Church;

the Church did not grow out of Scripture. Again, the Church drew up the Scripture canon, and but for its authority it would be impossible to determine with certainty the list of inspired books or the extent and meaning of inspiration. Again, the Church made headway in the world without the aid of Scripture, and would be essentially what it is had the New Testament never been written.

“What,” asks St. Irenæus a hundred and fifty years after the birth of Christ—“what if the apostles had not left us the Scriptures? Would it not be our duty to follow the order of the tradition which they placed in the hands of those to whose care they confided the government of the churches, as many barbarous nations who received the faith have followed this order, guarding, without letters or ink, the truths of salvation written in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, observing sedulously the ancient tradition?” The Christian religion would have prevailed without Scripture, but we cannot imagine that it could have prevailed without the Church, since the Church is its historic and objective form, its divinely-constituted organism, while the writings in which some of its principal facts and doctrines are embodied are subsidiary and in the nature rather of a precaution. These writings bear upon their face and history evidence that they are incidental and auxiliary to the Church. Of the twelve apostles seven wrote nothing, and hence we infer that to write was not part of the commission given by Christ. And

those who wrote did not write by mutual understanding, or at the same time, or upon a general and preconceived plan. Their writings are fragmentary, and St. John, who closes the list, expressly states that but part of the life and teachings of Christ had been recorded. So great a miracle as the raising of Lazarus to life is passed over in silence in the three earlier Gospels, and remained a matter of tradition until the end of the first century. But two of the four Gospels were written by apostles; and those of St. Mark and St. Luke, if we put aside the authority of the Church, have no greater claim to be received as inspired than the epistles of St. Clement and St. Ignatius. The New Testament is not one book but a collection of writings, which when taken together are still but a fragment. In none of the books of which it is composed is there a connected order of instruction, or methodical arrangement of articles of faith, or clear definition of points of doctrine. On the contrary, the terms which express the most important truths are left, without explanation, in all their vagueness; and councils, schools, and controversialists have been employed from the beginning until now in determining the precise meaning of texts apparently the most simple. And these investigations and discussions have served, among other purposes, to show the almost incredible variety of signification which it is possible to attach to even the plainest Scriptural phrases, and to prove, consequently, that unity of belief is not to be hoped for by those

who make the Biblical text the final court of judicature in controversies concerning the faith. To look upon the Bible as such an authority is to make of it the most strange, obscure, confused, and perplexing document known to men. Not only was it written by men who were already members of the Church, and who owed and rendered obedience to this divinely-constituted tribunal which was before and above their writings, but they themselves in these writings recognize this fact. They address their written words not to unbelievers but to those who had already received the faith, and had received it, consequently, from the Church and not from Scripture; and hence it is their purpose not so much to teach the doctrines of revelation as to exhort to the practice of the truth into which they had been baptized. Hence, too, there runs all through the apostolic writings a tacit or express reference to the Church, its sacraments and its worship, as to the living and authentic embodiment of Christian truth and life. The Church is the "pillar and groundwork of truth"; "if a man will not hear the Church let him be as a heathen and a publican." "He that heareth you heareth me: he that despiseth you despiseth me"; "as the Father hath sent me, so I send you." "I will send the Spirit of Truth, who will lead you into all truth." The faithful are not contemplated in isolation or as individuals, but as members of one body, of a household, a sheepfold, a kingdom, which is the Church. Distinctions of race and

social condition have disappeared, "the middle wall of partition" has been broken down, and those who believe in Christ are brethren, children of one Father in heaven, and members of one community on earth. Holy Writ, then, is not addressed to individuals separate from the Christian communion, with a view to have them unite and coalesce into a body of Christ, but it is addressed to believers who are in communion with the Church, have accepted its authority and acknowledged the duty of obedience to its teaching. As Scripture grows out of the Church, just as in the natural order the written law or constitution is evolved from the organic life of a people or nation; and as it everywhere supposes the existence of the Church as the historic embodiment of the life and work of Christ, it is plain that any attempt to separate it from the Church and make it an independent authority must prove disastrous. Scripture contains, indeed, God's word, but the meanings put upon it or the inferences drawn from it by individuals or bodies other than the one divinely-appointed organ of Christian truth are but men's words; and when these words of men are set up as oracles of heaven and standards of supernatural faith, confusion, disorder, schisms, heresies, sects, contentions, quarrels, controversies, wranglings, strife, and finally indifference and no-religion are the inevitable result. Scripture serves a divine purpose, and helps to preserve the spirit and truth of Christ, only when its original and permanent

relationship to organic Christianity, which is the Church, is acknowledged and respected; but if it is looked upon as an independent and complete revelation, in which the truths of salvation have been stored away to be sought for and found by each individual seeker for himself, the necessary result of the historic evolution of the principles involved in this assumption will be destructive of Christian faith. When you arouse the critical faculty of the individual by telling him that he is, by the appointment of Christ, the interpreter of God's word, he will fatally be driven to ask himself whether all these writings which have been bound in one volume and put into his hands are God's word; and he will as fatally be driven to confess, if he is honest, that here at the very outset he has fallen upon a question to which, from his point of view, no answer can be given. He may, indeed, succeed in satisfying himself that these various writings are authentic, but he can find no argument that will prove that they are inspired, and consequently God's word. Scripture does not testify to its own inspiration, nor would such testimony, if given, be conclusive. The text of St. Paul (2 Timothy iii. 16) is not pertinent to the present inquiry, and this is tacitly admitted in the new version recently made in England. But if there were a text—to make an absurd hypothesis—plainly affirming the inspiration of the New Testament, it would not prove the point, since the inspiration of this text itself would have to be established before the general statement could

be received. Arguments in favor of inspiration drawn from the literary style of the Bible, from the sublimity of its moral doctrine, from the harmony that pervades its teachings, and other like considerations, can at best have but incidental force. No one will affirm that the literary style of the New Testament is perfect, or that special divine assistance was necessary to the authors of such a style; and to write down the discourses of our Lord, in which this sublime moral teaching is found, inspiration was not needed; and to refer to the doctrinal harmony that pervades the Scriptures would be an act of folly in one who accepts the dogma of private interpretation, since the history of this dogma leads to the conclusion that no other book than the Bible exists in which there is so manifestly a total lack of doctrinal unity. Or will it be said that the New Testament is inspired because it was written by the apostles? The inference is illogical and the statement of fact incorrect.

It cannot be maintained that whatever an apostle might write must be inspired, and the writers of the New Testament were not all apostles. To say with Calvin that we know the Bible is inspired, as we know light from darkness, white from black, is plainly an absurd affirmation. If it were true the unending and wearisome controversies on the subject would not only be meaningless but impossible. Nor is anything gained by declaring that the Holy Ghost witnesses in the individual conscience to

the inspiration of Scripture. This is, in fact, a concession that there is no proof of inspiration in the theory of those who make the Bible an independent revelation and final authority. If the witness of the Holy Ghost is necessary, those who have not such witness have not sufficient reason for believing in inspiration; and those who assume that they have within themselves the testimony of the Divine Spirit have no argument to show that they do not mistake their own whims for the voice of God.

Let us, however, for the moment lose sight of the fact that those who separate Scripture from historic Christianity are unable to prove its inspiration, and let us suppose that they can be certain that in the sacred volume they have God's word. The concession will be useless; for the Bible, even when its inspiration is proven, can be of little help to one who recognizes no other authority in religion and hopes to reach a true and accordant system of faith by studying the Scriptures torn away from their organic historic environment.

Men readily listen to nonsense when it flatters them; and hence the doctrine that every man is the interpreter of God's word finds acceptance, just as the phrase, "All men are born free and equal," passed current for a century in a country where a very large number were born slaves, and where, as elsewhere, all are born unequal. "Senseless," says Plato, "is the man who imagines he can put his art in a book, as if mechanical

types could transmit living and lucid knowledge. Written discourses seem to think and to speak, but when interrogated they make ever the same unvarying answer. They pass from hand to hand, and are taken up by the intelligent and by others for whom they were not written ; and these dead characters know not in what presence they should speak or before whom they should be silent. If the writing is despised or unjustly attacked its author must come to its aid, for it cannot defend or help itself. He who possesses the science of the true, the beautiful, and the good will not bury them with a pen in black ink or imprison them in characters which take away their life and movement."

Writings which are not upheld by some living authority become the occasion of division and discord, since they stimulate thought without being able to direct or control it.

The history of Plato's *Dialogues* furnishes a striking instance of the truth of the words just quoted from them. They are models of high and exquisite philosophy transfused into the most limpid style, and yet what has been their fate ? The voice of the master had hardly died away when Aristotle drew from his works a system which is not Platonic ; and then arose the three Academies, each claiming to be the heir of Plato's teaching, and each giving to his words a different interpretation. Later came the school of Neo-Platonists, who found in the *Dialogues* quite other doctrines than those which Aristotle and

the Academies had been able to see there. And the controversy continues still ; nor does it turn upon minor and incidental issues, but hinges upon the central and essential point in Platonic philosophy—the theory of ideas. Or take the writings of Descartes, or Hegel, or Dante, or Shakspere, and what conflicting schools of opinion cluster around them, each claiming to represent the true thought of the master ! And of such disputes there is no end ; to such discussions there is no issue. Is the Cartesian doubt a real doubt or is it simply a method ? In a writer of such clearness and precision as Descartes the answer to so plain a question ought not to be difficult to find. His style has been compared to the inarticulate speech in which disembodied spirits may be supposed to interchange their thoughts, so lucid is it, so pure and clear, like the atmosphere which makes all things visible ; and yet for two centuries and a half this point has been hotly contested, and the controversy continues. Or what shall we think of the noblest creation of Shakspere's genius ? Was Hamlet mad or did he but feign madness ? To his mother he says :

“ Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks.”

And yet Ophelia, enlightened by the divining force of love which reads the heart's hidden thought, exclaims :

“ O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword ;

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh."

Here is a work in which human genius has confessedly reached the zenith of its power, and yet the critics are, have been, and will be divided on so vital a point as the real worth and meaning of the character of Hamlet; and some have even been willing to maintain that the character itself is absurd and impossible, a misgrowth of the capricious and irregular mind of the poet. We find in books, as in life, what we seek. We read ourselves into them and make them speak the thoughts we wish to hear. They are like instruments which give forth a hundred different symphonies according to the will and skill of the performer. A poet only can read a poet, an orator understand an orator; and Luther was well inspired when he declared that "no man who has not during a hundred years governed the Church with the prophets, with Elias, Eliseus, John the Baptist, with Jesus Christ and the apostles, is competent to interpret Sacred Scripture." And yet this book of books, embracing within itself all ages, all styles; teaching the most perfect wisdom and the most hidden mysteries; written at wide intervals and in dissimilar languages; bearing upon itself the impress of distant regions, and strange modes of thought and unfamiliar customs, and the

many circumstances of varying degrees of barbarism and civilization; speaking in figure and trope, through portent and miracle; now rising to the highest reach of poetic inspiration, now descending to the level of children's thoughts; drawing its lessons from the usages of a peculiar race, from little known events, from the accidents of climate and soil, from social conditions that have long since passed away; taking all tones, reflecting all moods—prophetic, didactic, dramatic, threatening, commanding, consoling; dealing with all conditions of human life, from the king on his throne to the beggar by the wayside, from the shepherd with his flock to the captain with his army—this book of God, various, involved, many-sided, mysterious, obscure as the workings of nature, must find a fit interpreter in every peasant slave and low-thoughted churl. And Jesus Christ has come into the world to bring God's truth to men, only to deliver it up to the whims of the ignorant and capricious multitude, who must find no obscurity or difficulty in the sacred volume before which saints and doctors have knelt through the vigils of centuries, seeking to be made worthy to catch a ray of the divine light. But the Bible is not merely an inspired book, a universal sacred literature: it is besides a code of divine laws; and a code necessarily supposes social life and government, from which it has been evolved and to which it is applied, unless it is a mere Utopian theory, an essay in speculative sociology. The legal text supposes a tribunal and a judge; and

legislation, which cannot be thought of except as the act of authority, can be applied to the end for which it exists only by authority interpreting and enforcing its decrees. And since it is the office of religion to regulate conduct, and since rules of right living are found on almost every page of the Bible, it is evident there must be some divinely-constituted authority to interpret its commandments and to watch over their observance.

From whatever point, then, we view the subject we are compelled to recognize the fact that the religion of Christ is before and above the writings which record its early history. The New Testament grew out of the Church: the Church wrote it with the pen of the evangelists and apostles, as the rise of heresy or other circumstance called for the aid of such documents; the Church preserved it; the Church catalogued its books and placed them in the canon; and the Church supplemented and interpreted its words by the light of that tradition which is her fuller consciousness of the truths of revelation, and which, together with the written word, forms the deposit of faith. Hence tradition, which is the mind of the Church, enlightened and guided by the Holy Ghost, represents the full knowledge of revealed truth, a part of which only was written by the apostles, who, in obedience to the command of the Lord, preached the Gospel, and employed the pen only as a secondary and less efficacious means of propagating the faith. They wrote in the Church and for the Church, and had no intention, and

could have had none, of substituting Scripture for the living voice of the divinely-constituted organ of truth. As Christianity is newness of life, the methods by which it is perpetuated must ever remain vital; and the Holy Ghost, who inspired the apostles to write, abides until the end of the world with the Church as teacher and guide. Hence the teaching Church is the immediate rule of faith; and Scripture and tradition are such rule, only as their meaning is defined for us by the infallible judgment of the Church. She speaks to the world to-day as on the day of Pentecost—not in the name of a book, as though repeating written words, but in the name of Jesus Christ and of the Paraclete whom He had sent. Such as she was in the beginning she still is, or else she was never divine, was never the body of Christ, the organ of his truth, and the minister of His sacraments. She has not grown up out of a book, but is the creation of God, who breathed into her, as into the body of Adam, a living spirit, to be her light and strength and the determinative principle of her history. Hence St. Augustine could say: "I would not receive the Gospels if the authority of the Church did not command me to receive them"; and St. Basil could declare that without the Church the written Gospels are but empty words. And when we thus leave the Scriptures in the hands of the Church who wrote them, we are more truly reverent than they who call upon the distracted and preoccupied multitude to read words which they can but misunderstand.

stand, and so trample in the mire the pearl without price. To wrench the Bible from its original place in the divine economy, and to turn it to ends to which from the very nature of things it is unequal, is to pervert and degrade God's word.

Revelation, like nature, includes the idea and fact of a providence by which it is controlled and preserved; and hence the historical evolution of all creeds which accept revelation but deny authority is towards naturalism and unbelief, whereas the growth of supernatural faith is found where the principle of infallible authority is admitted to be involved in the idea of revealed religion. And this principle precisely is the dividing line between the Catholic Church and all other systems of belief which have laid claim to the Christian name. As the Christian religion prevails in and through the Church, the Church prevails by virtue of her infallible authority; and this is the meaning of the words of the Apostolic Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church." The Church immediately follows the Holy Ghost as the instrument and organ through which He teaches the truth of Christ, and hence our faith in the Church is faith in divine, infallible authority. As the apostles and disciples believed in the infallible authority of our Lord, their converts believed in the infallible authority of the Church which He had founded, with which He had promised to abide, and upon which the Holy Ghost had descended. And as the faith began to spread in this way, so it con-

tinued to make headway in the world, preserving and propagating itself, like all organisms, by virtue of the principle to which it owed its existence. In the book of Acts, the earliest Church history, we find the apostles, with Peter at their head, governing and guiding the faithful. They preach to Jews and gentiles; converts are made, congregations of Christians are organized; doubts and difficulties are settled; the wicked are chastised, and even thrust forth from the fold of Christ; and as they move forward to make new conquests for the kingdom of heaven they leave behind them bishops, like Timothy and Titus, to govern the churches which they had founded. Let us hear St. Clement, the disciple of St. Peter and his successor in the Roman See: "The apostles," he says, "preached the Gospel to us by the authority of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ by the authority of God; for He was sent of God, and the apostles received their mission from Him—both, in convenient order, according to the will of God. Now, after they had received this mission, and been confirmed in faith through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and been strengthened by the word of God and nourished with the fulness of the Holy Spirit, they went forth to proclaim the kingdom of heaven. They preached in country and in cities, and appointed as bishops and deacons those among their first converts whom they found strong in faith. . . . And the apostles knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that priests would be raised up to honor

the episcopate, and, as they possessed perfect fore-knowledge, they designated those whom I have just named as their successors, and established in this way the law of succession, so that when those whom they had appointed should come to die other tried men might be chosen to succeed to their office."

St. Irenæus, who died a martyr in the year 202, and who had received his training from Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist, teaches the same lesson in a different form. "The Church," he says, "though spread throughout the world, and even to the ends of the earth, guards the faith which she received from the apostles and their disciples. . . . She guards it as though she dwelled in only one house; she believes it as though she had but one heart and one soul; she preaches and teaches it as though she had but one mouth. And though human tongues are various, the virtue of tradition is one and identical. The churches which are in Germany believe and teach nothing different, nor those in Iberia, nor those among the Celts, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which are established in the central parts of the world. But as the sun, God's creature, is the same throughout the earth, so the light of true preaching shines everywhere and enlightens all men who wish to understand it. And among those who preside over the Church the skilful in speech does not say one thing and the feeble another; for, the faith being one and

immutable, he who can enlarge upon it does not increase it, and he who has but little to say does not diminish it."

Tertullian, the first Christian author who wrote in Latin, has left a book in which this whole subject is treated with equal force and perspicuity. "What will you gain," he asks, "by having recourse to Scripture when the one denies what the other affirms? Seek to understand rather who has the faith of Christ; to whom the Scriptures belong; by whom, through whom, and at what time that faith was delivered by which we are made Christians. For where the true faith is, there are the genuine Scriptures, there their right interpretation, and there all Christian traditions. Christ chose His apostles, whom He sent to preach to all nations. They delivered his doctrines and founded churches, from which other churches drew the seed of the same doctrine; and this process still goes on. Now, to know what the apostles taught—that is, what Christ revealed to them—recourse must be had to the churches which they founded and which they taught by voice and by letters. Whatever teaching is conformable to the faith of these mother-churches is manifestly true, since it is what they received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God; and whatever conflicts with this faith is new and false."

Everywhere in these early ages Christianity presents itself to us as a social organic fact, and not as an opinion or theory of religion to be

reached by the study of the Bible. Inquirers and seekers were not referred to the Scriptures, but were taken hold of by the Church and placed under a discipline according to which the mysteries of the faith were revealed to them only by degrees; and they were baptized even while still in ignorance of many important Christian doctrines. They were therefore required to make an act of faith in the whole body of Christian truth, though essential portions of it were as yet unknown to them. How can such a course be justified? On the principle that in becoming Christians they accepted as infallible the authority of the Church, and were therefore prepared to receive without doubt or question any and all mysteries which she might propose to them. The neophytes did not learn the doctrines of faith from Scripture, but from authorized catechetical teachers, who, indeed, frequently appealed to the written word to confirm or explain the truths which they delivered, not in the name of the Bible, but in the name of the infallible authority of the Church.

Thus St. Irenæus teaches that he who believes in God and in Christ will have no difficulty in accepting other mysteries of faith, "if he read the Scripture diligently, with the aid of those who are priests in the Church, and in whose hands, as we have shown, rests the doctrine of the apostles." If we turn to the history of the œcumenical councils we find that the same method of infallible authority is followed in the public teaching

of the Church. When heresies spring up or doubtful points are mooted the bishops of the Catholic world, with the Successor of Peter or his delegate at their head, meet in general congress and authoritatively define the true doctrine. "The Church of God teaches this," they say, and not, "This is our interpretation of Scripture." The principle implied in these words underlies the action of all the councils of the Church, from the first, which condemned Arianism, to the last, which defined the infallibility of the pope.

The principle, then, of an infallible living authority lies at the root and origin of the Christian religion. It was acted upon by the apostles; it was received by their successors; it guided the missionary labors of the Church and controlled her public teaching. It was by virtue of this principle that she was able to exist as a separate and independent power; that she was strong enough to withstand the persecutions of the Roman Empire, to win converts and make headway, though compassed on all sides by unrelenting and powerful enemies. Did this vital principle grow obsolete or was it abandoned after the conversion of Constantine? On the contrary: when the right of the Church to live was officially and publicly recognized, this her constitutive principle asserted itself with greater force and higher evidence. Multitudes now professed the faith who by their lives denied its virtue, and the conflict with the worst of all enemies, those who belong to one's household, broke forth with a fury

and strength such as the age of the martyrs had not known. Arianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Pelagianism, and other heresies made war upon the Church; and the temporal power, taking advantage of the confusion, inaugurated schisms; and the carnal-minded gave themselves up to license and debauch; and paganism, in its decay, so infected the very atmosphere in which the Church lived that, dying, it seemed about to destroy her whom it attacked in vain while in the vigor of health. In this the most trying ordeal through which the Christian religion has ever passed it was, under God's providence, saved from destruction by the Church. In such a state of things the Bible would have been of as little help as it is to-day in the hands of Protestant missionaries in India or China. Only an organized spiritual empire able to teach, to define, to command, to punish, conscious of its own inherent strength and authority, certain of its historic descent from Christ, made great and venerable by the lives and deaths of countless martyrs, and confident of the abiding presence within itself of God's Spirit, could have stood erect amid the ruins, degradations, despairs, and infamies that gathered round the dying form of paganism. "If Christianity had not been a Church," says Guizot, a Calvinist, "it is difficult to know what would have become of it at the fall of the Roman Empire; and we can well believe that it would have perished amid the general dissolution and the invasion of the barbarians. . . . Only a strongly-organized,

strongly-governed society was able to struggle against such a disaster and to come forth unbroken from such a tempest. I do not think it is saying too much to affirm that at the close of the fifth century it was the Church, with its institutions, its ministers, its power, which defended itself against the internal dissolution of the empire and against barbarism, which conquered the barbarians and became the bond, the agent, the principle of civilization, between the Roman world and the barbarian world."

And in what way did Christianity gain possession of the barbarous peoples that overturned the throne of the Cæsars and set up a new reign of violence and blood? Was the Bible distributed among those populations? Did they read it and so come to the knowledge of Christ? They were without letters, without literature; grossly ignorant, and, like barbarians, in love with ignorance; despising knowledge and looking upon the life of a scholar as the drudgery of a slave. The bare thought of carrying a book to such people, and asking them to read it, could never have entered a sane mind. They knew not the meaning of reading, could not read, and had no desire to learn to read; had nothing but a jargon for the instrument of such thinking as they were able to do, and did not dream of anything better. The pages of a book and their minds were as wide apart as the poles. They understood life and facts; and hence when living men came to them with a historic religion, and preached Christ in the name of the

Church that had been the witness of His life, had seen Him die, had beheld Him risen from the dead, had received the Holy Ghost, had spread from Jerusalem through the world and made disciples of the nations, had consented to death and through suffering had triumphed over the masters of the earth, and had not perished amid the upheaval and downfall of all human institutions—when this great and heavenly power spoke to them from the lips of apostolic men who believed and were not afraid, and were ready in their turn, if need be, to suffer and to die, they listened; and as the years went by they bowed their necks to the sweet yoke of Christ and were baptized; and it was not until well-nigh a thousand years had passed away that some of their descendants discovered that to be able to read is as necessary to salvation as to be baptized.

And the history of their conversion, as the history of the conversion of the Roman Empire, is but the history of all conversions to the Christian faith. To the Church Christ gave the commission to preach the Gospel; to the Church He made the promise of perpetual divine assistance; to the Church He has kept the promise. The grain of mustard-seed was not sowed on paper, in the pages of a book; it was planted by the hand of God in the hearts of believing men whom He had chosen. There it took root, and for centuries the peoples of the earth have found refreshment and life beneath its boughs.

The attempt to propagate Christianity by distri-

buting copies of the Bible, though supported by great nations and carried on with the help of inexhaustible financial resources, has proven so signal a failure that it has become historic ; and the enemies of the Church, in desperation, point to Russia as an example of conversion not effected by Catholic agency. But even here historic truth must compel them to admit that the main work had been done before the consummation of the schism ; and it was continued, not with tracts and Bibles, but with the aid of orthodox faith and the sacraments.

Here, then, is the Catholic Church, spread through the earth, having bodily occupation of the world, and existing as a universal spiritual empire, with an organization of her own and a definite history. She existed before the New Testament was written ; its books were composed by her children for the edification of her children ; she extended her sway by virtue of the divine life within her ; she overcame the Roman Empire ; she survived the world-wide ruin that attended and followed its downfall ; she converted the barbarians ; she made whatever conquests have been made for Christ. Heresy follows her from age to age, ever dying and ever nascent, taking all forms and in turn denying all Christian truths, while she moves on, one and self-consistent, unfolding the divine mysteries as their utterance is called forth by the negations of disbelief. Gnostic and Montanist, Arian and Nestorian, Eutychian and Monothelite, Pelagian and

Donatist, rise up and assail her, and fill the world with their clamor, and then sink into silence, to be remembered only for her sake. And in later ages Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingli, and Knox, and King Henry leave her and turn upon her, and inaugurate new heresies, and shake the earth with controversy and battle; and still she does not perish, but grows more certain of herself; enunciates with new emphasis the faith she held from the beginning; marks more clearly the organic law of her divine constitution; widens the boundaries of her empire; touches with deeper love for the suffering and the fallen the hearts of thousands of her children; and, though the world will not believe it, she knows that she is infallible and indefectible, because she knows that God upholds her. She is to-day, in her organization, in her principles, in her relations to the world, in her aims, in her methods, what she was in the first age of her existence. She was then the Catholic Church; she is now the Catholic Church. The name was incommunicable then; it is incommunicable now.

“If ever,” says St. Cyril to his catechumens, “thou art sojourning in any city, inquire not simply where the Lord’s house is (for the sects of the profane make an attempt to call their own places houses of the Lord), nor merely where the church is, but where is the Catholic church. For this is the peculiar name of this Holy Body, the Mother of us all, which is the Spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And St. Augustine, too,

more than fourteen hundred years ago, was struck by this phenomenal and incommunicable name, which he counts one of the bonds that hold him in the Church. "I am held," he says, "by the consent of people and nations; by that authority which began in miracles, was nourished in hope, was increased by charity, and was made steadfast by age; by that succession of priests from the chair of the Apostle Peter, to whose feeding the Lord after His resurrection commended His sheep, even to the present episcopate; lastly, by the very title of Catholic, which, not without cause, hath this Church alone, amid so many heresies, obtained, in such sort that whereas all heretics wish to be called Catholics, nevertheless to any stranger who asked where to find the Catholic church none of them would dare to make reply by pointing to his own basilica or home."

In the Church, then, one, Catholic, holy, and apostolic, we have the Christian religion in its objective, historic reality—a true Church, built upon facts by the hand of God, and not the idea of a Church, not a theory of a Church. Whoever argues against this Church argues against Christianity, whether he knows it or not; whoever seeks to undermine it seeks to undermine the only stronghold of supernatural faith; whoever is its enemy is not the friend of God or man. If Christianity is true and holy the Church is true and holy; if Christianity is supernatural the Church is supernatural; if Christ is God's Son

the Church is God's work. God has stamped His name upon nature, and it proclaims His being in clearer tones than it speaks any other truth; and yet when we scrutinize its workings obscurity envelops us and we see faint trace of God's finger. In the same way the Church is manifestly a divine creation, a permanent supernatural fact, the body and form of God's redeeming providence; though when we study its fortunes in the world, its conflicts with human passions, its contact with ignorance, and power, and wealth, the supernatural seems merged in the natural, like a fair ship that is swallowed up by ruthless billows. And so our free-will remains intact and the virtue of faith is preserved. We may believe in God or we may refuse to believe in Him; we may believe in the Church or we may refuse to believe in her. But faith is better than doubt; and the highest faith is twin-brother to the worthiest life.

XI.

THE RISE OF PROTESTANTISM.

PROTESTANTISM is the outgrowth of a revolt against historic Christianity, which in the sixteenth century was so essentially a part of civil and political society that a successful religious rebellion necessarily involved a disturbance of the whole social order. Great movements can never proceed from accidental or occasional causes. To seek in the personal character of Luther or Napoleon for an explanation of the triumph of the Reformation or the Revolution is both unsatisfactory and misleading. The heroes of times of crisis are made possible by their environment. Every idea, whether true in itself or merely associated with what is true, which greatly moves men, stirs the hearts of a whole generation, creates opposition, and finally prevails, is clothed with power and contagion by the social condition of the age from which it springs. Personal passion and private interest lay hold of it and turn it to their use, but they do not create it. The strength of Protestantism lay in its alliance with the revolution which, at the time of the birth of this new heresy, was transforming European society. It

was a tendency rather than a doctrine, and hence readily united with whatever forces were antagonistic to the then existing state of things. The special religious beliefs which it emphasized were of comparatively slight influence—a truth at once evident when we reflect that its creed varied from year to year and from country to country, while the revolution continued to make headway with irresistible force. To understand the causes by which this politico-religious crisis of the sixteenth century had been brought about, we must consider the social forces which had been at work in the world since the conversion of Constantine. The first and the greatest of these was the Christian Church. It represented and propagated a new life, new principles of conduct and of government, new ideas as to man's worth and destiny, new doctrines concerning marriage and the family, concerning the relations of master and slave, of ruler and subject. It taught that all men are brothers and equal; that they have duties towards God, and consequently divine rights; that conscience is supreme; that the soul is immortal and free; that to save it is each man's life-work, to do which he should be prepared to withstand states and emperors, and even to suffer death. Hence those who received its teachings with a sincere heart became chaste, merciful, patient, strong, and free. They loved one another; they were kind and helpful to the poor, to the sick, to prisoners and slaves; they held all men in honor, and human life, even in the unborn infant, was in their

eyes sacred and divine. Their marriage was without stain, and virginity was deemed a heavenly state. They prayed often; they fasted at stated times; they denied themselves even innocent pleasures. They were content and cheerful in prison and in exile; in torture and in the agony of death they gave thanks to God. They abstained from games of chance, from public spectacles, and from boisterous laughter. They walked in God's presence and carefully avoided, in word and act, whatever is unbecoming and low; and if perchance an evil-doer was found among them he was not permitted to remain, unless he submitted to long and severe penance. They were obedient to the state, except when its laws conflicted with their duty as Christians, and then they appealed from Cæsar to God, asserting the liberty of the soul with which Christ had made them free. They were persecuted, put to death by tens of thousands, and yet they never sought to excite tumults or rebellions, or took part in conspiracies against the tyrants who were shedding their blood. Such were the Christians of the first ages, who by virtue and martyrdom triumphed over the world and won for the Church recognition and liberty. But with the conversion of Constantine a wholly different state of things came into existence. The name of Jesus and His cross were now painted on the battle standards of the Roman legions, and the great emperor kissed the scars of the confessors whose bodies had been torn and maimed during the persecutions. Now the multitudes which

always follow in the wake of power and success poured into the Church, and the temples of idols were deserted. But the society over which Christianity had thus triumphed was the most corrupt and sensual, and among the crowds who asked to receive baptism there were very many whose conversion was but apparent, and who, with the name of Christian, remained in reality pagans. This intermingling of nominal Christians with true believers introduced an era of degeneracy and corruption in strong contrast with the age of confessors and martyrs. Worldly honors relaxed the virtue of even the sincere, and the sense of security proved more dangerous than the sword of the persecutor. The love of gain, the fondness for pleasure, the desire of high office, awakened in the hearts of believers the passions of greed, of lust, and of ambition ; so that the world, though called Christian, was still a perverse world. The great bishops and doctors of the fourth and fifth centuries abound in denunciations of the degeneracy of the Christians of their time. St. Augustine thinks it necessary even to warn converts of the scandals and immoralities which they will find among those who make profession of Christian faith. "You will find," he says, "among the crowds who fill the churches drunkards, misers, impostors, gamblers, rakes, theatre-goers, quacks, magicians, astrologists, fortune-tellers, all of whom, nevertheless, pass for Christians."

When the Roman Empire, undermined by corruption of every kind, was trampled into frag-

ments beneath the feet of invading hordes of barbarians, they, in learning the vices of civilization, did not lose their native habits of ferocity, cruelty, and lawlessness. During the period in which the barbarians gradually took permanent possession of the provinces of the dismembered empire, when the Roman armies had been beaten and scattered, when the authority of law had ceased to exist, the only power which remained to protest against, and in some measure hold in check, the lawless passions which had inaugurated a reign of brute force and violence, was the Catholic Church. Rapacious and bloodthirsty hordes given over to violence and lust amid the ruins and putrefaction of pagan civilization—this was the world in the midst of which the Church found herself, the only power left on earth which had the heart to believe in goodness or the courage to hope for better things. But if from this mingled mass of passion and corruption any high and worthy social or religious life was ever to spring forth, the Church must not stand far off, must not go into the desert, must not shut herself up in some sanctuary to weep and pray. She must go into the midst of blood and uncleanness, giving little heed whether her hands are stained or her vesture soiled. And so she acted, consenting, like her Divine Founder, to go down into the dark and loathsome grave, that she might do an immortal work, knowing that death had no power to hold her. To fulfil her mission she had to set her hand to every kind of work, as she was then the

only power in the world that strove for righteousness, for order, for knowledge, for liberty. She drained the marsh, she ploughed the field, she built cities, she taught school, she sat in judgment, she presided over councils, she made war, she declared peace, she freed the slave, she watched over the family, she created knights, she crowned and uncrowned kings. Her missionaries had sowed the good seed of the Gospel and of civilization amongst the barbarous tribes, and the religious and the civil orders were consequently intimately united. But this complication of the Church with the whole social fabric, though necessary, though the only means of salvation for the world in that day, involved troubles, conflicts, rivalries, and abuses of many kinds. Christ and the world are at strife, and to save the world He deemed it needful to suffer the world to crucify Him; and the Church could not become the saviour of society without finding the society she was saving her enemy. Wealth, power, honors, high place, are the foes of humility, and humility is the basis of Christian character. Hence when popes were more powerful than emperors, when bishops were among the rulers of the earth, when monks were the counsellors of kings, temptation to abuse of power was so great that the simplest knowledge of the human heart is enough to persuade us that many must have yielded. And when the priesthood was the great highway to worldly position and honor many must have sought it from sordid motives. And when all

the world lay in the shadow of ignorance, ignorance must have been found also in the sanctuary. And when ecclesiastics were taken from semi-barbarous populations as yet more under the control of passion and habit than of reason and religion, abuses must have existed among them; and the refusal of the Church to admit the descendants of the barbarians to the priesthood for centuries after their conversion showed her sense of this danger.

When some progress had been made in the work of bringing order out of chaos, and the great figure of Charlemagne looms up before us in the latter half of the eighth century, we are at once prepared to see him enter into close alliance with the Pope, and to seek to spread the Christian faith as still the chief and almost only means of widening the boundaries of civilization and of giving to society form and consistence. When on Christmas day, A.D. 800, Pope Leo in St. Peter's Church, after the Gospel of the Mass, placed the crown of the Cæsars upon the brow of Charlemagne and hailed him emperor, he proclaimed the victory of the Church over barbarism, and at the same time inaugurated a new epoch in history, out of which at length the modern world was to be developed. From this day the pope and the emperor become the central powers in the history of the middle ages; and the most marked and essential characteristic of Christian civilization, the separateness of religious and civil authority, is constituted and organized

on a world-wide basis. At the same time, however, is planted the germ of all those quarrels between popes and emperors, between bishops and princes, which finally lead to schism and then to the great Protestant heresy.

The state of society in Europe in the age of Charlemagne was not sufficiently advanced to give permanence to a system of government such as that which he had introduced, and when his strong hand was removed the empire fell to pieces, and in its stead there grew up what is known in history as the feudal system of government. Under this system lands were bestowed by the sovereign in the form of a benefice or fief, so that the persons to whom they were granted became, in accepting the grant, the vassals of the donor, to whom they bound themselves to render certain services, generally of a military kind, and in return received from him a promise of protection. This system, which spread in a short time throughout Europe, was the method which society took to protect itself against violence and force; and it was probably the only means which in the ninth and tenth centuries could have prevented Europe from relapsing into barbarism. The empire had been broken up, there was no central authority able to maintain order throughout a large territory, and the reign of terror and violence seemed impending. And just at this crisis the incursions of the pagan Northmen grew more frequent and destructive. They attacked the coasts of France and Germany, ascended rivers, and, penetrating

to the interior of the continent, burned and plundered towns, monasteries, and churches, and all with impunity, though they were comparatively few, because society was disorganized and chaotic. It was as a remedy for such desperate evils that feudalism was brought into existence; and it rendered important services, though it may be fairly said that it was a desperate remedy and inevitably led to serious abuses. Under this system the territory of the greater part of Europe was divided and subdivided into estates, in which each landlord, while promising obedience to his suzerain, was practically absolute master within his own domain. And thus Christendom was filled with a horde of petty tyrants who, when not battling with invaders, were engaged in warfare with one another.

It was the reign of a sort of legalized pillage and slaughter which was hurtful alike to religion and civilization. These feudal lords, shut up in their castles with their chaplains, gradually ceased to attend public worship and to receive religious instruction; and the serfs who dwelled on their lands were suffered to remain in complete ignorance. The priests themselves, who not unfrequently were compelled to take up arms to defend their churches, or to perform manual labor that they might have bread, were but imperfectly educated. And as feudal benefices were attached to ecclesiastical offices, episcopal sees were invaded and held by depraved men or taken possession of by some neighboring lord, who placed the mitre

upon the head of one of his sons, sometimes a mere child, in order to be able in his name to rob the Church. Even the great and central See of Rome fell during this period into the hands of the petty tyrants of the Campagna, who, amidst strife and bloodshed, thrust their unworthy favorites into the Chair of St. Peter; and had not the Christian religion been divine it must have perished in the midst of such inconceivable confusion, lawlessness, and ignorance. But in the almost universal darkness the light still burned before the tabernacle, the race of saints and apostles was propagated; Prussians, Bohemians, and Russians were converted, and great and heroic souls were found, sometimes wearing a crown and sometimes clothed in rags. It is part of the glory and strength of the Church never to be content with the religious and moral state of her children. She holds up the standard of the perfect life, even in the midst of the most fallen and corrupt populations, and is incapable of despair. Her faith in the regenerating power of the religion of Christ is divine; and she is not despondent in the presence of corruption, as she is not weak in the face of persecution and calumny. There can, indeed, be no reformation or need of reformation in her essential life and constitution, in her doctrinal and moral teaching, in her sacraments, or in the constitutive elements of her government. These have been fixed by the hand of God and are unchangeable; but as it is her destiny to live in contact with human society in

all its ever-varying degrees of development and decay, it must also be her fate to find herself again and again surrounded and interpenetrated by abuses and disorders of all kinds. The causes which in one century contribute to her progress become in another the fetters which deprive her of liberty. Now the faith and love of her children heap upon her honors and riches, and in another generation these temporal blessings turn to curses. Institutions which at one time are most beneficial become with the progress of society the occasion of scandal and ruin. Religious orders which in their vigor and fervor were as the conquering armies of God, in their decay and dissolution infect the very air of heaven and stifle the souls of multitudes. Since, then, the unchangeable Church must adapt herself to a world which is constantly changing, her external forms and relations are necessarily subject to all the vicissitudes which affect human society, and are, consequently, in ever-recurring need of re-adaptation and reformation; but these efforts to reach a higher and purer life must, to be legitimate, respect the organic constitution of the Church, and whenever this is violated the result is disintegration. The alliance of the Church with feudalism was in the beginning and for a long time helpful alike to the cause of religion and of civilization; but when the feudal lords, laying claim to the right of investiture, filled the episcopal sees with simoniacal occupants and fed the contagion of concubinage in the lower clergy, the

Church, in the person of Gregory VII., inaugurated a reformation which stirred all Europe to its centre and gave an impetus to freedom and morality which accelerated the progress of the Christian nations. Innocent III., in convoking the Fourth Council of Lateran in 1215, expressly declared that it was his desire to bring about a reformation of the entire Church—*reformationem totius Ecclesiae*; and in pursuance of this end that council drew up and promulgated seventy-two reformatory decrees, in which all the abuses then existing in the Church were fearlessly brought to light and their correction provided for. Again, in 1311, Clement V. called together a general council, the chief object of which was to bring about a reformation of morals; and efforts in the same direction were made in provincial and diocesan synods in various parts of Europe. But, unfortunately, many of the abuses of those ages were so interwoven in the social organization that nothing short of a revolution could have destroyed them. The bishops, especially in Germany, were in many instances feudal lords, having vast estates, high worldly rank, and great influence in national affairs, and their position had enabled them to be of great help to the Church and to civilization; but as time went on power and wealth filled them with worldly pride and ambition, and deprived them both of the will and of the ability to execute the reformatory decrees of councils; and even where the bishops were not themselves temporal lords they

were to a great extent dependent upon feudal suzerains.

It was this weak and dependent state of the episcopate which impelled the popes, in the great contest concerning investitures, to come forward as spiritual dictators; and but for their powerful interference the Church, in Germany at least, would have been absorbed by the state or would have sunk beneath the weight of corruption. When appointments to ecclesiastical offices are in the hands of temporal rulers the standard of clerical morality will invariably be lowered, since the favorites of princes owe this distinction, almost without exception, to their subserviency rather than to any high qualities, and the pliant servants of kings, even though of the better sort, can hardly possess the sacerdotal spirit; and had not the popes vindicated the rights of the Church in this matter simony and incontinence would have fastened upon Christendom with ineradicable malignancy. The Roman Pontiffs, therefore, in their long and bitter contests concerning the right of investiture, defended a principle which was essential to the life of the Church, and which could not have been successfully maintained had they not assumed in the face of usurping governments the position of the spiritual dictators of Christendom. But this dictatorship, which in the age of Gregory VII. and Innocent III. was so salutary, so necessary even to the preservation of religious and civil liberty, grew in the course of time to be the

occasion of serious danger to the peace and progress of the Church. To be a universal dictator, and at the same time mediator between tyrannical and lustful kings and emperors, was, indeed, almost an impossible office—one, at least, which in such a world as this must bring sorrow and trouble upon the Church, though an angel should hold it in her name. One of the immediate results of this increase of worldly power and influence was a greater centralization of the government of the Church. Appeals to the Pope from all parts of Europe became more frequent. The exemptions and privileges of the mendicant orders were increased; indulgences were multiplied; dispensations were granted and benefices conferred directly by the court of Rome in a way which in a measure superseded the authority of the bishops, who in consequence grew lukewarm in their devotion to the Successor of St. Peter, and were not indisposed even to join with temporal rulers in protesting against what they held to be undue assumptions of power; and thus both princes and prelates came to look upon the supreme authority and paramount influence of the popes with jealousy and suspicion. The world that gathers round the throne of royalty is as unscrupulous as it is insincere; and in an age when the prejudices of courts readily developed into public opinion calumnious abuse of this or that Pope who happened to have quarrel with the reigning king or emperor worked its way into the hearts of a whole people, and thus little by little

love and reverence for the Papacy itself was destroyed.

The most unfortunate of these quarrels, in its consequences at least, was that which at the commencement of the fourteenth century broke out between Philip the Fair of France and Pope Boniface VIII. The emissaries of the king seized on the person of the Vicar of Christ and treated him with such indignity that he shortly after died of grief and chagrin, and Philip at once began to intrigue for the election of a Pope who could be made to subserve his ambitious designs, and finally succeeded in having one of his own subjects chosen Sovereign Pontiff. The new Pope, who was elected in 1305, and who took the name of Clement V., transferred his residence, in accordance with the desire of Philip, from Rome to Avignon, and by this step incurred the ill-will of the other Christian nations and sowed the seed of future schism and discord. Avignon remained the papal residence for seventy-two years, and during that time the Papacy lost its cosmopolitan character and was looked upon as a dependency of the French crown. Hence the interference of the popes in the affairs of other nations was resented, and regarded, indeed, as the meddling of a foreign and inimical power. The spirit of nationalism was in this way introduced into religious affairs and controversies, and one of its first-fruits was the Great Schism of the West, which broke forth immediately upon the return of the papal court to Rome and lasted for nearly forty years.

French cardinals, supported by the French king, revolted against Urban VI. and set up an anti-Pope; and as the confusion increased there were at one time three claimants to the chair of St. Peter, each upheld and defended by a following of bishops, princes, and nations. As years went on Pope succeeded Pope both at Rome and Avignon, and there appeared to be no way out of the darkness and the confusion. The bark of Peter, it seemed, was on a shoreless sea, without helm or compass, and through the blackness of the storm-clouds no faint ray of divine light pierced. At length the cardinals and bishops, ignoring both the claimants to the Papacy, assembled in council at Pisa and cited the rival Pontiffs to appear before them, and on their refusal to obey condemned them as contumacious and schismatical, and at once proceeded to elect a successor, who took the name of Alexander V. But as the deposed Pontiffs still had a following of nations, they in turn anathematized the council, and the result was that, instead of two, there were now three claimants to the Papacy. Then the Council of Constance was convoked, which deposed two of the rival claimants and induced the third to resign, after which a Pope was elected who was recognized by the whole Church. During these years of confusion and chaos abuses had grown inveterate and the papal power had received a blow from which it never wholly recovered. In the bitterness of the strife the cry was even raised that it would be better to have no Pope at all, and

we seem to hear Luther's voice a hundred years before he began to preach. Wickliffe, who died during the Schism, called the Roman Church a synagogue of Satan, condemned the holding of property by ecclesiastics, railed at monks, and denounced colleges and universities as pagan in their origin and diabolic in their tendency. His words were re-echoed in Bohemia by Huss, who in violent language declaimed against popes, bishops, priests, and monks, and whose fiery zeal inspired John Ziska to raise an army of fanatics, with which he laid waste the whole country, burning churches and monasteries and butchering priests and monks. Temporal rulers eagerly took advantage of the helpless state to which the Papacy had been reduced by the Great Schism to reassert their claims to spiritual jurisdiction. A few years after the close of the Schism Charles VII. practically destroyed the authority of the Pope in France by an instrument known as the Pragmatic Sanction, which continued in force down to 1515, two years before the Protestant rebellion broke forth; and in Germany and other countries similar measures were adopted. The Schism had taught kings and governments the dangerous habit of meddling in the affairs of the Church, and had besides aroused the prejudices and passions of nationalism against its visible head. Hence from the termination of the Schism down to the outbreak of the Protestant revolt the popes were able to do little or nothing to reform abuses. The controversies which had grown out

of the troubles had given rise to all kinds of views and opinions concerning their office and authority, and had confused the ideas of even sincere Catholics as to the constitution of the Church itself, so that many grew accustomed to consider the Church as separable from the Pope, or to hold even that a Pope is not essential to the Church; and since councils had deposed popes, the multitude inferred that there is in the Church a power above the Pope. Hence the doctrine that an appeal from the Pope to a general council is right and proper; and hence, too, the feeling, which in those times of confusion found acceptance in the hearts of many well-meaning people, that the best thing for good Christians to do is to obey their bishops and not to trouble themselves with disputes as to who is the lawful Pope. This tendency towards Episcopalianism was strongly marked in the proceedings of the Council of Basel, which are as openly anti-papal as the diatribes of Luther; and the factious prelates who composed this assembly, a majority of whom were French and German, were supported both by the king of France and the emperor of Germany, who took great pains to have these doctrines circulated among their subjects. Thus little more than half a century before the Protestant revolution broke forth were bishops and governments busily at work undermining all respect and reverence for the Papacy, which, in the presence of the discredit into which it had been brought by the Schism, was an easy task. On

the very eve of the Reformation Maximilian I. and Louis XII., having declared war against Pope Julius II., set up in his stead a council of five cardinals, and in justification of their conduct appealed to the decrees of the Council of Basel. Louis even went so far as to compel the French clergy to excommunicate the Pope, and those who persisted in recognizing his authority were now stigmatized as papists. In Germany anti-papal doctrines were eagerly received by all classes, and no calumny was too gross to find belief, if the Pope was its object.

When Luther, therefore, made no popery his war-cry he but gave utterance to the feelings of hatred and bitterness with which the hearts of multitudes were swelling; and when at length the name of Protestantism was hit upon as by chance, it was recognized on all sides that this word embodied the very soul of the whole movement, which was a protest against the Pope both as a feudal sovereign and as the Vicar of Christ: and this protest was all the more vehement because, during the quarrels and confusion of the past hundred years, men had grown accustomed to look upon the Papacy as something extraneous to the Church and the Christian religion. Religious passion may be excited by hatred as well as by faith and love; and it was hate, and not faith and love, which fired the zeal of the Reformers and their followers.

That this is the true view of the facts all dispassionate and fair-minded men ought now to be

able to recognize. Justification by faith, the denial of free-will, the doctrine of total depravity, the rejection of good works as helpful to salvation, which were the most characteristic teachings of the early Reformers, could surely have no power to inspire religious enthusiasm; but when once the anti-papal fury was thoroughly aroused it was easy to persuade people that to destroy the Pope was the best way to serve God, and their rage naturally extended from the Pope to whatever was in any way supposed to be connected with him. He, it was said, had given to the Church its actual organization; he had created the religious orders; he had introduced vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity; he had imposed the obligation of abstinence and fasting; he had invented the doctrine of purgatory and promulgated indulgences; he had canonized the saints and introduced the use of sacred images; he had taught the necessity of good works, and, while proclaiming free-will, had tyrannized over both the Church and the state; he had, in a word, annihilated the glory of God and substituted human mechanism in the place of the redeeming work of Christ. The spirit of iconoclasm invaded the multitude, which, fickle and senseless, destroyed to-day what it had adored yesterday. There were undoubtedly among the Reformers a certain number of men whom the doctrine of salvation through faith alone filled with religious earnestness and enthusiasm; but the great multitude of those who

flocked to the standard of revolt were carnal-minded, as Luther himself expressly declared, and incapable of any purer zeal than that which is inspired by hate or the love of plunder.

Whoever reads the writings of Luther cannot fail to perceive by what insolent and immoral crowds he is surrounded. His complaints that men are worse than they were under the Pope are loud, and he can find no language to paint the hideous scenes of barbarism and lawlessness that mark the progress of the new faith. Nobody, he declares, is now willing to contribute to the support of the ministers of religion; the schools are empty and the churches are falling to ruin. Had not political passions, national aspirations, and the greed of princes come to the rescue Protestantism would hardly have left its mark in history, but would have been drowned in the blood of the war of the peasants and in the pandemonium of strife and confusion raised by the quarrels of its leaders.

Its great and permanent success was due to the fact that European society was then in a crisis by which feudalism was being transformed into monarchy; and as the Church had been for centuries and was still in close alliance with feudalism, kings and peoples, in their aspirations to national unity, gave their support to a religious rebellion which, by weakening the Church, would also undermine the power of the feudal lords; and as the greater number of the kingdoms of Europe had at one time or other placed themselves under the feudal

sovereignty of the Pope as a means of protection, they eagerly took advantage of Protestantism to throw off what they now regarded as a foreign yoke. This conflict between feudalism and monarchy had been brought about by the progress of society, and the triumph of monarchy was inevitable, as the overthrow of monarchy is inevitable in the present social crisis which has brought it into conflict with republicanism. The social condition which had called feudalism into existence had passed away, and as it was no longer necessary it was no longer strong. It had been a protection in barbarous ages, but it had now become an obstacle to civilization, and the great forces which were coming into existence were its natural enemies. Gunpowder, the printing-press, the revival of learning, the extension of commerce, the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, and the discovery of America greatly accelerated the progress of the Christian peoples towards a state of society in which feudalism is not possible. But in the Europe of the sixteenth century whatever weakened the power of the great nobles strengthened that of kings; and as the cause of the Church happened at that time to be bound up with that of feudalism, the tendency of the age favored all anti-Catholic movements, as its prejudices approved of all anti-papal protests. The Church was the greatest feudal power in the world, and it was inevitable that the crisis which was sapping the foundations of feudalism should seem to threaten the permanence

and stability of the Church itself; but the revolution was political and social far more than it was religious, and when the transformation towards which Europe was tending had been effected Protestantism made no further progress. In the first half-century, however, which followed Luther's rebellion the triumphs of the new faith were so rapid and so startling that the day of doom for the Church seemed to have come. Nation after nation fell away from her, and even her most devoted children were stunned and grew faint of heart. Controversy was useless. The debates of theologians were not audible amid the noise of battle and the angry disputes of diets and parliaments. In less than fifty years the Church lost all northern Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, England, and Scotland; and in France, Austria, Poland, Switzerland, Bavaria, and Belgium the triumph of Protestantism appeared to be no longer doubtful. In all northern Europe Ireland alone remained unshaken. The victories that had been won endowed the new religion with a strength which was believed to be divine. The German princes, to whom it had given an opportunity to throw off their feudal dependence upon the emperor, in their gratitude almost persuaded themselves that their wars had been inspired by zeal for a pure faith, while the rich possessions of the Church which they had seized upon intensified their hatred of her. Philip of Hesse, Luther's powerful defender, was a strenuous adherent of his doctrines, not only because

they permitted him to rob the Church, but also because they quieted his qualms of conscience in the midst of his adulteries. In Prussia Albert, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, heard Luther gladly when he preached to him the duty of violating his vow of chastity and founding an hereditary monarchy. Melancthon himself confessed that the princes who favored the Reformation "felt no concern for purity of doctrine, or the spread of light, or the triumph of the creed, or the improvement of morals, but looked only to the profane and petty interests of this world."

Luther, who taught that the authority of princes is of divine right and absolute, openly urged on the work of despoiling the Church in Germany, and even made inflammatory appeals to the leaders of the Protestant party to go into Italy and seize upon the ecclesiastical possessions of that country. In his whole warfare upon the Pope, Luther, with the skill of an orator, made use of the German hatred of Italians, and he thus made it appear that the cause of Protestantism was that of German independence and patriotism; and while he urged the people to expel the agents and defenders of the Pope as the emissaries of a foreign potentate, he taught the princes to take into their own hands the spiritual jurisdiction which had been wrested from the Church. Thus the Reformation gave to the princes of Germany an opportunity to emancipate themselves from feudal subjection to the emperor, to enrich themselves with the goods of the Church, and to in-

crease their power by laying claim to both spiritual and temporal authority ; and it is therefore not surprising that they should have become the zealous defenders and propagators of the new religion. That the rapid spread and triumph of Protestantism was due in great measure to their favor and arms is a well-established fact, as even the warmest friends of the movement concede.

“ That the Reformation was brought about by the civil powers,” says Jurieu, a bitter opponent of the Catholic Church, “ is incontestable. It was introduced into Geneva by the Senate ; into other parts of Switzerland by the Grand Council of each canton ; into Holland by the States-General ; into Denmark, Sweden, England, and Scotland by kings and parliaments. Nor did the civil power merely guarantee full liberty to the partisans of the Reformation ; it took from the papists their churches and forbade their worship.”

“ The adherents of the Church of Rome,” says Hallam, “ have never failed to cast two reproaches on those who left them : one, that the reform was brought about by intemperate and calumnious abuse, by outrages of an excited populace, or by the tyranny of princes ; the other, that, after stimulating the most ignorant to reject the authority of their Church, it instantly withdrew this liberty of judgment and devoted all who presumed to swerve from the line drawn by law to virulent obloquy, and sometimes to bonds and death. These reproaches, it may be a shame to us to own, can be uttered and cannot be refuted.”

The apothegm of Frederick the Great on the causes which promoted the triumph of the Reformation has been often quoted. "In Germany," he says, "it was self-interest, in England lust, and in France the love of novelty."

But we must bear in mind that it was the social crisis which was undermining feudalism and strengthening monarchy that gave to kings the opportunity and the means of overthrowing the power of the Church in various parts of Europe. Her vast wealth excited the envy and the covetousness of princes and people; and the most sincere Catholics acknowledged that the monks had grown both too rich and too numerous. In England Cardinal Wolsey, in his capacity of papal legate, suppressed some of the smaller monasteries before any trouble had arisen between the king and the Pope; and when, later, Henry VIII. entered upon the work of spoliation he easily made it appear that he was but acting on a principle which the Church itself had recognized. His success was all the greater because the people were persuaded that their king—who was the bitter foe of Luther and his Reformation, and had been called the defender of the faith by the Pope—was incapable of doing anything that would overthrow the Catholic religion in England. The character of the kings and princes who took sides with the Reformers is of itself sufficient evidence that religious zeal or high motives of any kind had but little influence upon their conduct. Henry VIII., Philip of Hesse,

Albert of Prussia, Gustavus Vasa of Sweden, and Christian of Denmark were all despots, and some of them were stained with crimes of debauchery and cruelty; and, indeed, the Reformers themselves were distinguished, not by the qualities which mark saints and apostles, but by the passions which make revolutionary heroes. Their preaching was violent, inflammatory, coarse, calumnious—in a word, unchristian. Of the writings of Luther, Hallam says: "Their intemperance, their coarseness, their inelegance, their scurrility, their wild paradoxes, that menace the foundations of religious morality, are not compensated, so far at least as my slight acquaintance with them extends, by much strength or acuteness, and still less by any impressive eloquence. . . . His epistle to Erasmus, prefixed to the treatise *De Servo arbitrio*, is bitterly insolent in terms as civil as he could use. But the clear and comprehensive line of argument, which enlightens the reader's understanding and resolves his difficulties, is always wanting. An unbounded dogmatism, resting on an absolute confidence in the infallibility, practically speaking, of his own judgment, pervades his writings; no indulgence is shown, no pause allowed, to the hesitating; whatever stands in the way of his decisions—the Fathers of the Church, the schoolmen and philosophers, the canons and councils—are swept away in a current of impetuous declamation; and as everything contained in Scripture, according to Luther, is easy to be understood, and can only be understood in his sense,

every deviation from his doctrine incurs the anathema of perdition."* The man who is revealed to us in the writings of Luther could never be an apostle of the religion of Christ, but in times of turbulence and revolution he could not fail to be a powerful popular leader; and his personal influence in the movement was undoubtedly great. The Protestant world, in recognizing him as its typical saint and hero, has been guided by that historic instinct which reaches the heart of things independently of special facts. Protestantism was a revolution, a social transformation, in which religious passions played a leading part, because in that age religious institutions were interwoven with the whole fabric of society; and its great prophet was not a religious teacher, with the deep heart of love and peace which is born of the presence of God and eternity, but a fiery and turbulent demagogue, who makes use of all weapons and appeals to all passions without regard to decency, truth, or morality. It is only in the excitement and rage of revolutionary passions that inconsistencies such as are found in Luther's character are tolerated; and had he been the teacher of a new religion, and not the leader of a revolution, he would inevitably have fallen into discredit even with his own followers. But his extravagance, bordering on insanity; his love of extremes; his boundless abuse of all who differ from him; his power of invective and vulgar sarcasm; his recklessness in trampling upon all things, human and

* *Literature of Europe*, vol. i. p. 372.

divine—even his idol, the Bible—when the humor takes him; the inextricable confusion in which his own religious ideas were involved—all this and much else of a similar kind, which reason and religion condemned, served only to exalt him in the mind of the excited and fanatical crowds to whom he appealed.

An epoch of crisis and transformation is invariably marked by a contempt for traditional beliefs and established customs; and when the spirit of innovation has begun its work the masses rush in to overturn the whole existing order of things, and when they are in such a mood they will listen to none but wild and fanatical declaimers. Men of culture, like Leo X. and his Court, were too far removed from the people to be able to realize the true import of the revolution; and the books of Erasmus, the greatest wit and scholar of his age, found no sale, while all the world was reading the coarse and passionate diatribes of Luther, who, as Hallam says, did little more than bellow in bad Latin; and thus it happened, as it always happens in times of restlessness and excitement, that the printing-press, whose mighty power was then just beginning to make itself felt, was most effective as a weapon of attack and comparatively useless as a means of defence. As a great leader of men makes even obstacles serve his purposes, so does the stream of tendency, in epochs of social crisis, compel all forces to take the direction of its own current. Hence Protestantism, bursting forth from the ill-will and hatred caused by the

wars, schisms, and abuses of the middle ages, was at once merged into the vast and irresistible movement which was transforming European society, and its triumph was in reality the triumph of the revolutionary forces which then broke loose.

When the revolution subsided Protestantism lost its aggressive power. All its victories were won during the half-century in which the great upheaval of society was in progress, and in the three hundred years which have since passed away it has not gained a battle against the Catholic Church. Wherever, in Europe, Protestantism exists to-day it existed already within fifty years from its first entrance into the world. Since then opportunity after opportunity to invade the territory of the Church has offered, but the power to take advantage of them no longer existed. In France, at the close of the last century, the Revolution left the Catholic people without defence or protection. The churches were closed, the priests were in prison or in exile, and whatever was anti-Catholic was popular. But Protestantism made no advance, did not even suggest itself as a possibility; and when public opinion at length revolted against atheism it turned again to the Church. What fair and favoring opportunities were given to Protestantism in Spain during the Peninsular wars, when that country was held by English armies fighting for a cause for which every Spaniard was ready to die! But in those rich fields Protestantism

reaped no harvest, as it reaps none in Italy to-day, where many circumstances combine to help it take root there, if it were still a living thing. Its day of triumph passed away three centuries ago, and the future has for it no promise of victory. Whatever conflicting opinions thoughtful and observant minds may hold concerning the future of religious faith, the fate of Protestantism is not doubtful. Even now it survives not as a doctrine, not as a system of supernatural belief, but as a tendency. The controversies of three centuries have not been wholly barren of results. Some truths, at least, have been made so plain that the blind alone can fail to see them; and, among others, this: that the Bible, alone and unsupported, cannot serve as the basis of a concordant system of belief; that, unless it is defended and interpreted by some divinely-appointed authority, it fatally becomes, not God's word, but man's word. Supernatural revelation includes the idea of a supernatural organ through which it is conveyed, interpreted, and preserved. Hence those who begin by rejecting the authority of the Church come in the end to look upon Christianity itself as only a natural product, one of the many superstitions that have prevailed in the world. There is now no longer left to intelligent men a middle way. To reject historic Christianity, and to patch up a theoretical Christianity out of Bible texts, and to claim for this scheme of the brain a sanctity and import which are denied to the source and fountain-head of the

Bible itself, is a procedure against which common sense must revolt with scorn and indignation. And yet in this lies the germ and essence of Protestantism, inasmuch as it is a religion. Hence in very truth the old controversies with sectarian Protestantism have grown to be meaningless and impossible. If historic Christianity, which is the Catholic Church, is not God's supernatural religion, God has no supernatural religion. And if so, then will a wise man leave far behind him the narrowness, the bitterness, the dryness, the unloveliness of the warring and wrangling sects to which Protestantism has given birth.

XII.

THE DECLINE OF PROTESTANTISM.

THE religious and political passions which, in the social crisis of the sixteenth century, achieved such brilliant victories for Protestantism were not the product of the peculiar doctrines of Luther and the other Reformers; and this fact must be borne in mind, if we wish to reach true conclusions concerning the inherent strength or weakness of Protestantism as a religion. When the protest against abuses in the Church, whether real or imaginary, grew into a mighty rebellion against the Church itself, and in consequence led to the rejection of historic Christianity, as being the work of diabolical agency and the evil passions of corrupt human nature, it became necessary and urgent to find some substitute for the authority which had thus been overthrown and trampled upon. Some rule of faith, some witness to revelation, had to be found, if the new heresy hoped to maintain itself as a supernatural belief; and this substitute for the principle of authority could not be anything else than the Bible, since it alone remains to those who reject historic Christianity but still cling to faith in revelation. The position which Protestantism was thus forced

to take up was not new in history. Heresy had from the beginning appealed to the Bible against the Church. "Heresies have not sprung up," says St. Augustine, "save where Scripture, which is good, is ill understood." The formal principle of heresy has never varied: it has ever rested its claims upon Holy Writ, as separate from, and independent of, the Church and Tradition, which it has invariably held up to men as the sole source of religious truth and the only guide to its knowledge. And since heresy originates in rebellion against the authority of historic Christianity, it cannot, in theory at least, set up any organic authority in its place, but is compelled to make each individual the final and only judge of revealed truth. Now, this formal principle of all heresy is plainly anti-social; it tends to dissolve the bonds which unite men, and if left to work its way would inevitably lead to the disintegration of the religious organizations by which it is received. It is equally destructive of faith, since to accept doctrines as the result of individual study of Scripture is merely to have opinions. But faith and opinion belong to different worlds. It is also destructive of truth, since it justifies opposite and contradictory beliefs. Men who hold this principle may and do affirm and deny all specific Christian doctrines without doing violence to this fundamental article of the creed of heresy. But, worse than all this, the formal principle of heresy rests upon no foundation. Historically the Bible grows out of the Church; and

to overthrow the Church as the work of Satan, and to hold to the Bible as the word of God, is an absurdity so monstrous that it cannot be committed with impunity. If organic Christianity is not a divine work human reason must refuse to look upon its documents as inspired; and this, as is now manifest to all, is the result to which the historic evolution of the Protestant principle has led. But it is not my purpose at present to study the intellectual processes by which Protestantism has been undermined. I wish rather to consider it in its efforts to create and organize religious societies; for though it sought to find its justification in the principle to which I have referred, in point of fact this principle was from the very beginning violated and ignored. The right of private judgment, or freedom from all authority in religious matters, was preached, but it was not acted upon; and had not Protestantism openly and persistently put down the attempts of its followers to carry out the fundamental principle of its creed, it could not have long survived the confusion and disgrace with which it would have been overwhelmed by sectaries and fanatics. Hence the Reformers, so soon as their rebellion against the Church was successful, imposed creeds upon their disciples, dissent from which was held to be a crime, and they entrusted to the civil authority the mission of enforcing obedience to these arbitrary standards of belief, which were also marked by a spirit of narrow and intolerant dogmatism. Hence the rule of faith was in real-

ity not the Bible but the state-creed. The principle was even formally enunciated and acted upon that the ruler of the land makes its religion—*cujus regio, illius religio*. In the Palatinate, for instance, the people were forced within a period of sixty years to change their religion four times, that their faith might be kept in harmony with that of their masters. The Reformation, then, which had been brought about by the aid of princes, fell under the exclusive control of the civil authority, and was organized under the form of state religions or religions by law established. In this way Protestantism entered upon a new phase of its existence. Its triumphs were at an end, it had won its last victory, and it grew stationary and rigid in the firm grasp of the temporal power, from which, in Europe, it has never been able to wholly free itself. Dissent, indeed, has from time to time, in spite of the secular arm and of persecution, succeeded in making its way to public recognition, but it has been able to maintain itself only by the aid of strong ecclesiastical organizations based upon positive creeds, which are thrust between the individual and the Bible as a bar to the right of private judgment. It is only in America that opportunity has been given to test what native strength there is in Protestantism; though even here, during the colonial period, there was a kind of union of Church and state which enforced religious tests and provided for the support of public worship by taxation. The Revolution, however, ushered in a new era

in the religious as well as in the political history of the United States. In the Declaration of Independence appeal is made to God as the Supreme Judge of men and the Arbiter of human destiny ; but in the Federal Constitution there is no recognition of divine authority expressed. This fact is significant—it points in the direction in which American society was moving. Civil government was henceforth to be purely secular, and religion was left to itself, to survive or perish, but under conditions which must have insured the permanent triumph of Protestantism, had it possessed any inherent strength or vitality. The people, with the exception of a few thousand Catholics whose existence was hardly thought of, were not only Protestant, but were deeply and passionately prepossessed with the idea that Protestantism was the only religion possible to a free, enlightened, and progressive race. The prejudice that virtue, liberty, education, and the pure worship of God had been brought into the world by Luther's rebellion was almost universal. Even those who belonged to no ecclesiastical organization were persuaded that they were indebted to Protestantism for all that is most precious in life ; and hence it was an important element of the enthusiasm and energy with which the whole nation was moving forward in its career of unprecedented triumph over matter. Here, then, was a vast and open field, with no obstacle to interfere with the right of free inquiry or the private interpretation of the Bible, already in the possession of

Protestantism, which was protected and strengthened by public opinion and national prejudice

In the present argument, therefore, peculiar interest attaches to the history of the Protestant sects in the United States during the last hundred years. A century ago the Congregationalists were the most numerous and powerful religious body in this country. They represented the original American Church which had come over in the *Mayflower*, which had moulded the thoughts and habits of the people, which had been to them a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, which had caused the wilderness to blossom and showered upon a chosen race the priceless blessings of pure religion, and was not subject to change or decay. "A change in the solar system," said John Adams, "might be expected as soon as a change in the ecclesiastical system of Massachusetts." The Congregational ministers held the highest social position, were renowned for learning, and inspired a reverence and exercised a degree of authority which lifted them far above the preachers of any other Protestant sect in America. Important, too, is the consideration that Congregationalism was the religion of New England, which has exercised a paramount influence in the affairs of this country, and we should therefore naturally expect to see its form of worship prevail over all others, especially since more than any other it was native to the soil and associated with the struggles and triumphs of the nation. It was held to be a democratic and republican faith, the true re-

ligion of a free people, in perfect harmony with American principles and institutions, to the development of which it had powerfully contributed. An impartial observer who a hundred years ago might have taken a survey of the religious condition of this country would undoubtedly have been led to the conclusion that Congregationalism was destined to become more and more the dominant religion of the United States; and this is, in fact, the opinion to which Dr. Stiles, the president of Yale College, gave utterance in his election sermon delivered before the legislature of Connecticut in 1783. "When we look forward," he said, "and see this country increased to forty or fifty millions, while we see all the religious sects increased to respectable bodies, we shall doubtless find the united body of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches making equal figure with any two of them." The prophecy has not been fulfilled. Congregationalism has not only lost its vantage-ground and sunk into the position of a minor sect, but the faith which was its life is dead. At an early period the absence of doctrinal unity in the Congregational body was revealed in dissensions and schisms which gave rise to the wildest views and the most extravagant theories. The Armenians appealed from human creeds to Scripture; the Liberal Christians protested against the narrowness and exclusiveness of Calvinism; and then the Transcendentalists rose superior to all authority and acknowledged no god but WHIM, which cabalistic symbol their inspired prophet

wished to have inscribed over the door of the temple of this new faith. Mr. Emerson has given a description of the religious condition of New England as he saw it nearly half a century ago, in the midst of the rapid disintegration and dissolution of Congregationalism:

“The Church or religious party,” he wrote, “is falling from the Church nominal, and is appearing in temperance and non-resistance societies, in movements of Abolitionists and Socialists, and in very significant assemblies called Sabbath and Bible conventions—composed of ultraists, of seekers, of all the soul of the soldiery of dissent, and meeting to call in question the authority of the Sabbath, of the priesthood, and of the Church. In these movements nothing was more remarkable than the discontent they begot in the movers. The spirit of protest and detachment drove the members of these conventions to bear testimony against the Church, and immediately afterwards to declare their discontent with these conventions, their independence of their colleagues, and their impatience of the methods whereby they were working. They defied each other like a congress of kings, each of whom had a realm to rule and a way of his own that made concert unprofitable. What a fertility of projects for the salvation of the world! One apostle thought all men should go to farming; and another that no man should buy or sell, that the use of money was the cardinal evil; and another that the mischief was in our diet, that we eat and drink

damnation. . . . Others attacked the system of agriculture, the use of animal manures in farming, and the tyranny of man over brute nature; these abuses polluted his food. Even the insect world was to be defended; that had been too long neglected, and a society for the protection of ground-worms, slugs, and mosquitoes was to be incorporated without delay. With these appeared the adepts of homœopathy, of hydropathy, of mesmerism, of phrenology, and their wonderful theories of the Christian miracles. Others assailed particular vocations, as that of the lawyer, that of the merchant, of the manufacturer, of the clergyman, of the scholar. Others attacked the institution of marriage as the fountain of social evils. Others devoted themselves to the worrying of churches and meetings for public worship."

And in his address to the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, he is yet more emphatic. "I think," he says, "no man can go with his thoughts about him into one of our churches without feeling that what hold the public worship had on men is gone or going. It has lost its grasp on the affection of the good and the fear of the bad. In the country neighborhood half parishes are *signing off*, to use the local term. It is already beginning to denote character and religion to withdraw from the religious meetings I have heard a devout person who prized the Sabbath say, in bitterness of heart, 'On Sundays it seems wicked to go to church.' And the motive

that holds the best there is now only a hope and a waiting."

Divided within itself, a prey to conflicting elements, without unity of aim or belief, rent by fanaticism and undermined by infidelity, the Congregational body, the old "standing order of the churches," which a hundred years ago was the great ecclesiastical organization of this country, venerable yet vigorous, enthroned in the hearts of the people and a part of the national glory, is fallen into decay and become a ruin. In a population of over fifty millions there are but three hundred and eighty thousand Congregationalists; and they have neither unity of belief nor religious earnestness, but hold to the name and shadow of Puritan faith, though they have long since ceased to believe in the principles which made it a living power.

At the time of the Revolution "the Church of England in the colonies," as it was called, was in numbers and influence second only to Congregationalism. In the South it was upheld by law, and, except in New England, the greater number of those to whom wealth or social position gave distinction were its adherents; while Virginia, whose influence in national affairs was greater than that of any other single State, was its stronghold. Episcopalians had worshipped at Jamestown before the feet of the Pilgrims touched Plymouth Rock. When, therefore, in 1789 the Episcopal body in this country threw off allegiance to the mother-Church in England and proclaimed

itself an independent ecclesiastical organization, everything seemed to indicate that it was destined to become a great religious power. This anticipation, however, was not to be realized. Episcopalianism has inherited the weaknesses of Anglicanism. It has not been able to rise higher than its source, and has done little more than reflect, in a feeble and vague manner, the movements and counter-movements which have agitated the Establishment. It bears the taint of the original sin in which the Church of England was begotten. As its origin was political and mercenary, it has ever been worldly and compromising. No divine indignation has ever shaken it; no enthusiasm has ever pushed it beyond the bounds of propriety. It is, in its best phase, only the religion of good breeding and worldly wisdom. It has no mission for the zeal which persecution but inflames, for the heroic souls whom a divine impulse urges to the service of outcasts and beggars. St. Ignatius, Macaulay has said, had he been an Anglican, would have been the leader of a formidable schism, while John Wesley in the Catholic Church would have founded some great order devoted to the defence of her interests. There has never been a constructive movement in the Church of England. All great agitations within it lead out of it to sectarianism or unbelief, or else to the Catholic Church. The masses of the people at an early day fell away from it, and since that time it has not been able to find worshippers enough to fill the chancels of

the great cathedrals which it possesses but did not build. A like feebleness has marked the history of Episcopalianism in the United States. It has never stirred the hearts of the multitude, but is found almost exclusively in cities where its adherents are chiefly rich worldlings, who hold that respectability is the one mark of the true Church, and who would as soon think of associating with the vulgar crowd as of believing in an unfashionable religion. To be the Church of the rich alone is to be a false Church. No great religious movement has ever originated among the wealthy classes or been propagated by them.

The compromising manner in which they hold all truth weakens whatever cause they attempt to defend, and hence a Church which loses the poor loses the virtue and power of religion. This has been the general curse of Protestant sectarianism, but upon Episcopalianism it has fallen with a more malignant blight. The Episcopal Church is as uncertain in doctrine as it is feeble in action. Its early history in this country is remarkable chiefly for the apologetic and hesitating manner in which it urged its claims. The Maryland Convention in 1783 recognized "other Christian churches under the Revolution," and the Virginia Convention in 1785 expressed a preference for uniformity of doctrine and worship, as far as such uniformity might be consistent "with liberality and moderation." Bishop White even thought that the Episcopal Church might form a union with the Methodist, which shows how completely all

idea of dogma and Church authority had been abandoned. Higher views have since prevailed, but owing to the timidity of the bishops or their lack of power, or from absence of unity and a central authority, such views have only the weight of individual opinion. The Protestant Episcopal Church, like the Anglican, is divided within itself. High-Churchman and Low-Churchman, Ritualist and Evangelical, Sacramentarian and Erastian, all contend within its fold, which is an open arena for the profession and advocacy of conflicting religious beliefs. There are at present in the United States three hundred and twenty-three thousand Episcopalians in a population of over fifty millions. This is the result of a century's life and work in the midst of surroundings which seemed to be altogether favorable to the growth of Episcopalianism.

Far different has been the history of Methodism, which was organized in the United States as an independent sect in 1784. Its adherents at that time were few and belonged almost exclusively to the ignorant classes, and the preachers, many of whom were laymen, were in general as ignorant as their audiences. All that Wesley had asked of those who wished to be received into his sect was "a desire to flee the wrath to come and be saved from sin." He taught, with Luther, that man is justified by faith alone, and that the knowledge of his justification is revealed to the individual in sudden, miraculous conversion. "God gives us," he said, "in a mo-

ment such a faith in the blood of His Son as translates us out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness." And he affirmed that this clear consciousness of regeneration must be preceded by certain convulsive feelings, upon which follows perfect inward peace.

This theory of conversion has had the greatest influence in determining the character and securing the success of Methodism. It logically led to the view that religion is a sentiment, an experience, and not a doctrine. Protestant controversy, in which the champions of the contending sects did little more than hurl Biblical texts at one another's heads, had brought the dogmas of faith into general disrepute, and the masses, who were weary of this sour and contentious dogmatism, rushed from the arid fields of controversy to hear the preachers of the new sect, who spoke to the imagination and the heart. Here, as in Europe, the ignorant classes had been neglected by the dominant sects, and their Christianity had become a vague tradition, a bias half-political and half-religious. They were not, however, sceptical, but still had such faith in the great truths of supernatural religion as may be found in the midst of almost hopeless indifference. To them Methodism came with the strength and charm of a new revelation. Assuming the inspiration of the Bible and the divine mission and atonement of Christ, which were not questioned by their hearers, the preachers appealed, in sensational

and soul-harrowing harangues, to the imagination. Their whole aim was to create the outward, startling signs of conversion; and their success was often marvellous. Many persons in the audience responded to their wild oratory with shriekings and gaspings for breath, while others fell down as in a fit. At times whole congregations were seized with uncontrollable nervous jerkings and contortions. They shouted, they jumped, they clapped their hands, they saw visions, they heard the voices of angels. But, apart from this passionate extravagance, Methodist preaching possessed the power which always accompanies sincere and earnest appeals to the soul's innate consciousness of God's justice and its own sinfulness and need of mercy. In their serious moods men do not question eternal truths. They feel that it is childish and pitiful to quibble about God, the soul, sin, death, and judgment; and they recognize that these are the most solemn and awful realities of which it is possible for us to think. The Methodist preachers, therefore, appealed to sentiments which are part of our religious nature; and in this respect their sermons were but repetitions of truths which have been announced in the church from the beginning. The necessity of salvation, the merits of the Passion and death of our Lord, the power of faith, the evil of sin, the need of repentance, the efficacy of prayer, God's mercy, and the joy of a holy life are not subjects which Methodism, or any other form of Protestantism, has introduced into the Christian pulpit. But the

Methodist exhorters urged these truths with a power and freshness which brought them home to those who were either ignorant of religion or accustomed to hear from the pulpit only moral essays and sectarian controversy. Their zeal, too, was great, and their activity ceaseless. They crossed mountains, swam rivers, and waded through miasmatic swamps to carry the light of Wesley's gospel to those who were sitting in the shadow of death. They possessed the force and energy which are often found in ignorant minds when swayed by enthusiasm. They believed that God had called them, as He had called St. Paul, and that they had the testimony of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They had no need of learning or argument. Their consciousness of conversion and plain experience of God's miraculous dealings with them lifted them above the necessity of appealing to the intellect. Some of them doubtless were hypocrites, but that many of them were sincere no impartial inquirer can hesitate to believe. And the power of real enthusiasm is great beyond calculation. It is able to create those exalted moods in which the passions of the soul become contagious and gain new strength from the opposition which they inspire. The extravagance of the early Methodists rendered them ridiculous in the eyes of the other sects, while the rapidity with which they multiplied roused the ill-will and anger of the ministers.

"In routing out a nest of consecrated cobblers," wrote the Rev. Sidney Smith in 1809, "and in

bringing to light such a perilous heap of trash as we were obliged to work through in our articles upon the Methodists and missionaries, we are generally conceded to have rendered a service to the cause of rational religion." And he protests that it is his resolve to do all in his power to save "sober Christianity" from being eaten up "by the nasty and numerous vermin of Methodism." "Give us back our wolves again," he exclaims, "restore our Danish invaders, curse us with any evil but the evil of a canting, deluded, and Methodistical populace. Wherever Methodism extends its baneful influence the character of the English people is instantly changed by it. Boldness and rough honesty are broken down into meanness, prevarication, and fraud." The angry contempt of such invectives only served to inflame the zeal of the Wesleyans. The sneer of the worldling and the scorn of the polite and the learned but deepened their conviction that theirs was the spirit of Him who was born in a manger, who wrought in the shop of a mechanic, whose friends were the poor, and who chose rude and ignorant fishermen to preach His Gospel. Thus they grew to consider themselves a chosen race. In their discourses and writings they spoke of themselves as the pleasant children, the friends of the Redeemer, a godly people, with the seal and sign of election upon their souls. They believed that a miraculous Providence attended them; that thunder-storms, sudden deaths, and divine judgments waited upon their preachers to

confirm their teachings or to strike terror into the hearts of unbelievers. The miraculous seemed to become for them God's ordinary providence ; the laws of nature were superseded, and they lived in a wonder-land filled with heavenly visions and enchanting experiences.

America could not but promise rich returns for the labors of these enthusiasts. Whatever is sensational, whatever is startling, whatever makes appeal to our self-consciousness and self-importance, wins the victory over us. We listen to spirit-rappings, to weather-prophets, to Mormon saints, to preachers of the millennium, to world-reformers, to the whole tribe of declaimers who have discovered methods to make crime impossible and patent cures for every bodily ailment, and why should we refuse to hear these narrators of miraculous personal experiences, who are certain and have no doubt whatever that their feelings are the effect of immediate divine influence, and who therefore give and ask no other proof of the truth of their religion than their inner consciousness?

When states of soul are believed to be the results of God's supernatural action, those who hold such opinions readily become the victims of extravagance and fanaticism ; and a religion which rests its right to exist on conversions wrought through special visitations of the Divine Spirit will necessarily seek to call forth such manifestations of grace, and hence its progress will be accompanied and promoted by what are called

revivals, outpourings of the Spirit, violent reactions against the prevalent indifference and worldliness. No sect is so well adapted to this kind of religious agitation as the Methodist, and no people could be more susceptible to such influences than the Americans while revivalism was able still to hold out to them the promise of new and mysterious sensations and experiences. This was the power of Methodism in the days of its fervor and rapid spread in the United States.

Wesley first came to this country to preach to the Indians. "I hope," he said, "to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen. They have no comments to construe away the text, no vain philosophy to corrupt it." His mission to the Indians was a hopeless failure, but in the words just quoted he points out with true insight the kind of people among whom the preaching of his peculiar views would bring forth results. The early progress of Methodism in the United States was confined to the simple and unlearned, who generally dwelled in thinly-populated districts, exposed to danger and hardship; who wrought with their hands and seldom saw one another except at the meeting-house; who had "no comments to construe away the text, no vain philosophy to corrupt it." Living in the midst of gloomy and interminable forests, where the pioneer's axe and the farmer's plough had only here and there let in the dawn of civilization, having but log-cabins to shelter them from the changing season, eating only plain

food and wearing coarse raiment, impressed, moreover, by a sense of dependence, and helplessness even, in the presence of the blind and all-prevailing forces of nature, they were serious and slow to find anything either extravagant or absurd.

To these populations Methodism came with its camp-meetings, its revivals, its miraculous conversions, its jumpings and shoutings and fervid declamation, and its success outstripped the hopes of the most sanguine. A kind of religious contagion fell upon whole communities, and swept onward like a conflagration on the wide prairie when the grass is dry and the autumn winds are howling. So wonderful were the results that unfriendly sects even adopted the new methods, and, by accepting the principle of revivalism, tacitly, at least, admitted the truth of the Methodist doctrine of conversion. And so it grew to be the fashion to look upon revivals as "the great work of God," "the glorious work of God's grace," "the day of God's power," and "the dread majesty of God filling heaven and earth." This, of course, was a gain for Methodism, as it was a quasi-conversion of other sects to its cardinal principle of personal divine experiences as the all-sufficient and only sure foundation of true religion. It was not to be expected, however, that a movement of this kind would be permitted to go on without calling forth protests and opposition, and accordingly, after the great revival of 1740, in which Methodistic phenomena had broken

forth in all the various Protestant sects of the United States, a bitter controversy sprang up in the Presbyterian Church, which finally resulted in the schism of the Old Lights and the New Lights—the former condemning, the latter approving, the novel spiritualistic manifestations. The strong current of feeling, however, in all the sects was with the movement, and on its turbid bosom evangelical Protestantism was borne from the arid desert of Biblical controversy into the vexed and storm-swept sea of revivalism.

This period marks a crisis in the history of American sectarianism. The Orthodox became revivalists, while the Liberals committed themselves more decidedly to rationalistic views of Scripture. The tendency among the so-called evangelical sects to ignore their denominational differences was at once an evidence and a result of their loss of faith in their specific doctrines. The theory that religion is an emotional experience and not a dogmatic teaching prevailed more and more with them, while in the liberal sects Christianity rapidly lost its supernatural character and became a sort of deism. While a number of the leading sects were coming over to the theory and practice of revivalism the Methodist Church itself was agitated by internal dissensions, which finally led to its disruption and to the organization of a pro-slavery and an anti-slavery sect of Methodists in 1845. This was not the first schism which took place among the followers of Wesley in this country, but it was the most im-

portant, leading as it did to the formation of a separate organization in the South, and to the loss of nearly half the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This schism, however, far from arresting the growth of Methodism, only helped to make its progress the more rapid. The question of slavery from that time to the breaking out of the civil war took precedence of all others, and the Methodist Church, which in the North was the bitterest foe of slavery and in the South its warmest defender, became the ally of the political factions which in the North preached the duty of destroying slavery, by civil war if necessary, and in the South proclaimed the not less sacred duty of maintaining the peculiar institution, though they should have to die in its defence. In this way the Methodist preachers became a body of fanatical partisans, who made use of their position and authority as religious teachers to fan the flames of discord between the North and the South, though theirs was not the only sect which became the nurse of sectional hatred and strife. The intense political excitement which Methodism thus encouraged was favorable to the religious excitement which is necessary to the success of revivals; and we accordingly find in the years immediately preceding the schism, in which the slavery controversy was at its height, an unparalleled increase in the membership of the church. From 1840 to 1844 375,000 persons became Methodists. The irregularity of the progress of Methodism is a striking feature in its

history. In 1843 it gained 154,624 members; in 1848, 7,508; in 1856, only 896; then in 1858 the gain suddenly runs up to 136,032, the following year sinks to 17,790, and in 1862 there is a decrease in membership of 45,617. Revivalism is its chief agency, and its course is consequently uncertain. The wide-spread uneasiness caused by the preaching of the Second-Adventists, that the end of the world was at hand, proved to be a powerful stimulus to revivals; the commercial depression which followed the financial panic of 1857 had a like influence; and at the close of the war, when Methodism was preached to the freed-men and to the poor white people of the South, who, as they had not been slave-owners, were not friendly to the pro-slavery church, very great numbers were converted.

Whatever the causes may be to which its success is attributable, Methodism is undoubtedly at present the most powerful American sect, or rather group of sects, for the Methodists are divided into some thirteen separate and distinct denominations. The membership of the various Methodist sects in the United States in 1875 was 2,875,126, while that of all the Protestant sects, including the Methodists, was between seven and eight millions. The preponderance of Methodism, therefore, is decided; and its influence, in spite of the zeal with which it has preached to the poor and the earnestness with which it has advocated temperance, has contributed more than that of any other sect to undermine faith in Protestant-

tism and to produce the wide-spread and almost universal religious indifference and doubt which at present prevail in the United States. Its teachings and methods have impressed the masses with the idea that Christianity is an experience, and not a dogmatic system of faith ; that it is what the individual feels it to be, and not what its history proves it to be ; and, consequently, that the final test of religious truth is to be found in moods and sensations of the soul. Thus it seeks to rest Christ's historic religion upon the fervid imagination, and the result is necessarily disastrous. Fervor is not at our command, and, when possessed, it is not easily retained ; and when men persuade themselves that religion is not possible without this experience of God's miraculous workings in the soul, they easily fall a prey to delusion, or despondency, or indifference, or unbelief. Hence multitudes of those who are wrought upon in revivals until they imagine they feel God's presence within themselves, afterwards fall away and carry with them the conviction that what they were persuaded to believe the most sacred of all experiences, and, indeed, altogether miraculous, was in truth only a delusion ; while others who remain in the Church cannot without hypocrisy accept the Methodist doctrine of conversion and appeal to their own experience to prove that the regenerate do not feel even an involuntary impulse to sensuality and are in every respect free from sin. In turning the thoughts of men from historic Christianity to religious sensation-

alism the Methodists have met with success, but their central and essential doctrine is the germ of decay and death which will finally destroy their sect. They are hardly more than a century old, and have already lost much of the zeal and fervor which marked their progress forty or fifty years ago. The wonderful spiritual manifestations which were common then are rare now. The shout which in camp-meetings made the primal forest ring would now grate upon the ears of a fashionable Methodist congregation. The simplicity of dress and the quaint manners which the early Wesleyans affected no longer survive, and the religion of cobblers and backwoodsmen is clothed in broadcloth. Revivals, too, have lost their power and are but the semblance of what once they were. People have listened so often to this fervid declamation, to these burning appeals, that they no longer even go to hear the revivalist, unless he is accompanied by some famous singer. The pastors, too, have begun to perceive that these periodical sensations cause their congregations to grow indifferent to the regular preaching and services of the Church; and this they see all the more clearly since the business of revivalism has fallen to so great an extent into the hands of laymen and boy-preachers and female evangelists. "Whenever you meet with a region of country that has been burned over and over again with the fires of 'revivalism,'" says a well-known New York preacher, "there an almost utter and very general indifference to religion eventually supervenes."

We will permit Methodism, therefore, to drop into the common heap of sects, and turn to cast a glance at the general condition of Protestantism as it now exists. For a hundred years here in the United States the Scriptures have been in the hands of the people, the right of free inquiry has been unrestricted, with the social prejudices all in favor of what is called Bible religion. What is the result? In a population of over fifty millions there are some eight million Protestants, divided into between forty and fifty sects. This fact is of itself sufficient to show that Protestantism has lost its hold upon the American people. The masses are in no true sense Protestant any more than they are Catholic. In religion they are simply indifferent or in doubt, with a growing tendency to take up a hostile attitude towards Christianity. Whatever sympathy they may still have with Protestantism is inspired by what their traditional prejudices have led them to believe to be its social influence and secular tendency. As a religion they have lost faith in it and care nothing for it; but many are still inclined to look upon it as a chief cause of the liberty, enlightenment, and material progress of which the modern world is so boastful, though this view is rapidly disappearing before the usurping power of science, to which a growing public opinion ascribes the honor and glory of our present civilization. The fact is dawning upon the great body of Americans that Protestants did not create constitutional liberty, or

invent the printing-press, or discover America; and they are consequently losing faith in the validity of arguments in favor of Protestantism drawn from the steam-engine and the telegraph. And in this way the masses who had already lost faith in it as a religion are rapidly losing faith in it as an agent of civilization. Even the belief that it or any religion is necessary to the maintenance of law and order is losing ground, as is seen in the bills to tax church property which have been introduced into the legislatures of several States. The masses do not admit that the members of churches are superior in character or morality to the multitudes who make no profession of religion. There is also a kind of public opinion, felt rather than expressed, which recognizes that motives for joining the church need not be religious; that one may, without impropriety, become a member of this or that sect without believing in its tenets and without the desire for a higher and purer life. Church-membership is the open door to social, business, and professional intercourse with people from whom we should otherwise be unable to gain recognition. To belong to the church is thus at once a source of pleasure and of profit; and the only real obligation incurred is that of annually contributing a certain amount of money, and this, I believe, is not always enforced. The statement, then, that in a population of over fifty millions there are but eight million Protestants, gives but a feeble idea of the ruinous condition of

American Protestantism. If the members of the various sects had faith and zeal the cause would not be hopeless; but when they themselves are a prey to doubt, to indifference, and to the ungodliness of human respect what hope is there? Protestantism is active chiefly in the cities, and the presence of large Catholic populations has a good deal to do with this nervous and feverish vitality; but even here we find but a sparse church attendance of a few worldly respectable people, while the masses take no part in Protestant worship. The eloquence of the preacher and the music are the influences which regulate the attendance. The specific doctrines of the sects are seldom chosen as themes for the pulpit. The ministers, to quote an American Protestant preacher, "believe even less than their people of the doctrines of their creeds. They generally avoid doctrinal subjects in preaching, and have for some years based their teaching mostly upon utilitarian grounds." Of the effect of such preaching the same writer says: "It fosters scepticism and spreads distrust of all moral and religious verity, as the people are aware that the ministers practise the concealment of their real beliefs."* The popular sermon is rationalistic, secular, patriotic, humanitarian, æsthetic, fantastic—anything rather than religious. And when the attractive preachers have hit upon some odd or whimsical subject, or when some startling occurrence has given them a theme, they at once

* *Certain Dangerous Tendencies in American Life*, p. 13.

advertise it; while others think it proper to walk through the moral sewers of society, and to bring their reeking odors into the pulpit as a means of drawing an audience. This and other evils come of the dependence of the preachers upon their congregations. To be a moral teacher one must be free to speak his real thought, whether or no men wish to hear him; and a radical vice of the Protestant system, as it exists in this country at least, is its paralyzing action upon freedom of speech in the pulpit. The minister is free enough, indeed, to preach what the people who hire him wish to hear, but he dare not, unless he have the courage of a confessor of the faith, give public utterance to unpopular truths. Hence instead of lifting his hearers up to higher planes of thought and action he sinks to their level. And the popular taste is not only vulgar but is also generally vicious. How can a man thus hampered in his inmost sense of duty feel that he is fighting the battle of God, or what wonder is there that he should "practise the concealment of his real belief"? The priest is not free to preach what is contrary to Catholic truth; but this is a wide domain, and its boundaries are large and well defined, and have been recognized by him during the entire process of the formation of his mental and moral character; and hence whatever men may think of the doctrines of the Church, viewed in relation to the various philosophies and world-theories now current, the acceptance of the Catholic system need not interfere with the

liberty or the perfect sincerity of the priest in the pulpit; and, in any view, it is more consonant with reason and more conducive to moral and religious earnestness to hold one's self responsible to some high authority like that of the Catholic Church than to consent to accommodate one's convictions to the whims and prejudices of any and every self-constituted congregation of professors of religion. The wavering and uncertain attitude of Protestants towards the dogmas of Christianity, and the consequent timidity of the preachers wherever there is question of doctrine, have gradually created a kind of religion of sentiment, from which the teaching of definite truth is excluded; and hence many Protestant churches are not more distinctively Christian than temperance leagues, humane societies, and reform clubs, and the vital principle of Protestantism has so completely perished in these sects that they no longer have any real horror of Popery, and there is even every reason for thinking that they would cease to protest against the Church, if the Church could cease to protest against them.

And there are special agencies at work here in the United States which must destroy even the fragments of supernatural religion that still survive in the sects. The chief of these is the American family, which, under the influence of sectarianism and the Protestant theory of church-membership, has lost its distinctively Christian character, and, in consequence, is become the national nursery of religious indifference and secu-

larism. The multiplicity of sects led necessarily to the frequent intermarriage of persons of different religious faiths, and this, together with the view which Protestants have always taken that matrimony is not a sacrament but a civil contract merely, has gradually created the feeling that in the choice of a husband or a wife religion is almost the only thing which need not be thought of; and as a natural result the family has lost its religious character. The Protestant theory of church communion tends to the same end, since it assumes that one cannot be a Christian unless he has gone through the experience of phenomenal conversion. It is not the husband's fault if he is not a Christian, since he has not been awakened, convicted, and converted. Even the believing wife must accept the validity of his plea, and the children, as they grow up, advance the same argument and do not consider themselves Christians unless they happen to be seized upon by a miracle of grace.

Thus the American family, like the American state, knows no religion; and the American school, in order to remain in harmony with the education which the child receives at home and in the world, ignores religion. Originally the common school was denominational, but the multiplicity of sects and the Methodist doctrine of conversion deprived it of its religious character and fashioned it into a patent machine for the propagation of secularism and religious indifference. The Sunday-school is practically only a stalking-

horse to cover up the naked atheism of the common school. Here, then, we have the family, the state, and the school all unsectarian; and this trinity of social powers, thus constituted, must inevitably undermine and carry away the whole congeries of Protestant sects. I do not remember ever to have heard a speaker in a public meeting in this country who, in alluding to religion, did not think it necessary to disown sectarianism; and yet where is Protestantism, if it is not found in the sects? And, so far as I know, there is now in the United States no man of real ability who defends any one of the Protestant sects as the true form of Christianity, or even as its best form. There are among us able men who write in defence of natural religion, who uphold the claims of Christianity as a supernatural system, and who forcibly proclaim the social, moral, and intellectual blessings with which it has enriched the world; but what has all this to do with the truth of Methodism, Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism, or any other Protestant sect?

And yet, strange to say, Protestantism has been defended on the ground that it issues in a multiplicity of sects, and thereby stimulates religious zeal and activity. The real worth of sectarianism has been rightly estimated by Colonel Higginson. "Each sect in religion," he says, "helps to protect us from some other sect." In an American village of from fifteen hundred to two thousand inhabitants there are usually from three to five Protestant churches, each belonging to a

different sect. The buildings are mean, generally of wood, the preachers are dull, and the congregations small and lifeless ; and what artificial activity exists takes the form of sectarian jealousy and rivalry.

Competition may be the life of trade, but it is not the life of charity and religion. Sectarianism sets up in every village and town in the land organizations which not only teach conflicting religious doctrines, but which bring the Bible itself into discredit by making it the source of contradictions, and, consequently, of absurdities. The juxtaposition of these rival sects unsettles faith, and, since doubt is painful, it sets men to talking and arguing about religion. Hence in no other country are the masses so eager to listen to preaching which presents to them either new views or new arguments ; and it often happens that the old are novel in their eyes. And nowhere else is so much written about religion. The newspapers even, whose columns are filled with accounts of incests and adulteries, find that the people who read this loathsome stuff have also a taste for sermons, and that it pays to publish the discourses of popular divines. Now, all this talk and argument about religion is morbid. It is a symptom of disease. The faith that is deep and strong does not run to words. It is like Cordelia's love, "more richer than her tongue." It is deeper than the critic's view, and is not made or unmade by the words of men. Its fruit is work and not words. They who believe and do not

make believe find deeds easier than controversy. Much protestation is not the sign of faith any more than of love. The hollow heart is resonant. Who could have hope of the foreign missions of American Protestants? When they circumnavigate the globe to make a convert they circumnavigate it again to tell about it. This fatal tendency to boundless utterance takes from Protestantism the power of calling forth the high religious endowments of woman. What does it say to the woman who yearns to give herself wholly to God and to God's poor? It bids her distribute tracts, teach Sunday-school, preside over donation parties, and deliver temperance addresses—useful works, no doubt, but such as call into play only the more frivolous and garrulous faculties of woman, who is interesting and entertaining when she talks, but divine when, in silence and self-immolation, she yields her whole nature to the service of some great cause. Woman, unwedded and vowed to God, nursing within a virgin's heart a mother's tenderness, is the embodiment of faith in the unseen world; and a religion which does not understand this sees but earth. So long as there remain to a religion multitudes who are absolute for God and the world that is not seen, and for this faith make the venture of all life's promises and yet feel that they have made no sacrifice, such religion cannot perish. And the value of one who thus believes is above that of thousands who can only argue and discuss.

Observant minds have for some years now

recognized the approach of a religious crisis in the Christian world. The Protestant sects are visibly going to pieces, both in Europe and America, and their disintegration is everywhere accompanied by a kind of collapse of faith in all religion. The infidelity which is rapidly gaining ground does not call in question this or that doctrine or practice or theory of religion, but it treats the whole unseen world as an unreality, and feels no more scruple in denying the existence of God or the soul than in rejecting the doctrine of purgatory or the intercession of the saints. Hence the old controversies have not only grown obsolete, but all minor questions are being thrown aside as impediments in the fierce and mighty conflict which is now begun, and in which a power that seems not less strong or less confident than the archangel who, rather than not be first, would not be at all, is moving forward to dethrone God Himself. The battle is between Christianity and atheism, between supernaturalism and naturalism. In this struggle the enemies of religion turn aside from special or accidental views of Christianity, such as those of Calvin, or Luther, or Socinus, or Wesley, and concentrate their forces against supernaturalism in its organized and historic power, which is the Catholic Church, which, if it could fall, would bury beneath its ruins those fragmentary forms of Christianity which lie about it.

Protestants and unbelievers, I know, have accustomed themselves to look upon the Catholic

Church as henceforth an impossibility, as having lived its life and having now no more right to come back into this modern world than a corpse has to rise from the grave. But the course of events does not respect preconceived opinions, and as Protestantism is now manifestly going to pieces, the Catholic Church alone remains to defend the cause of God and His Christ against the armies of pantheistic, materialistic, and agnostic atheism.

I fully recognize the power of the destructive criticism of our day. Those who pull down and lay waste always seem to triumph until they are forced to undertake the work of building up and planting again. But when the new philosophy has shown, to the satisfaction of anti-theists, that there is no God who knows and loves, who is just and holy, that there is no soul distinct from sentient nerves, and that nothing is either right or wrong except in its relation to worldly utility, but that the universe, from the mind of man to the pebble in the brook, is a system of mechanic forces, working blindly, fatally, pitilessly, making conscience a mockery, liberty a delusion, and hope insanity, what temple will they build in this Dismal Swamp of a world where there is no God, no soul, no liberty, no virtue, no faith, no love, no hope?

Will they come, like Strauss, with a smirk and rubbing their hands, to tell us that in reading the poets, in listening to music, and in thinking of the glories of our country we shall find compensation for the loss of God and the soul's infinite hope? In

the presence of this hideous phantom of optimism the doctrine of those who teach that in the atheistic world there is no hope but in despair, no happiness but in death, seems to throw some faint ray of light into the Tartarean blackness. If the universe is mechanical force, nothing is desirable save that this feeble glimmer of reason and conscience which in some impossible way merges forth from it in the mind of man should at once and for ever sink back into the bosom of boundless unconsciousness; for if the universe were in fact what atheistic science proclaims it to be, and if this could be fully realized, the human soul would be more at home in hell than here. I would rather know that God is, and preserve this knowledge in eternal punishment, than to know that there is no God; since I cannot even imagine anything so contrary to my human thought and life as that senseless elements should be the supreme and only real power in existence.

When we consider that the attacks of scientific atheism upon supernatural religion, which is historic Christianity, or the Catholic Church, would, if successful, fatally lead to a view of nature wholly and radically at variance with all that is distinctively human in man, we cannot fail to perceive that in the great religious struggle of which I am speaking the Church occupies a position which no other organized power occupies, and from which it were an idle fancy to imagine that she can be driven. And hence it is useless to try to ignore the fact that the Catholic Church is a living power even in this mod-

ern world. The cry that the Christian religion is dead or dying comes down from centuries long buried. It was heard in Diocletian's time; but a little later the cross was Constantine's battle-standard. And St. Augustine tells us that in his day men proclaimed the Church's downfall nigh. "But I see them," he said, "sink into the grave, while she moves on." And Luther boasted that he had scattered the ashes of the Papacy to the winds of heaven; but his work is in ruins, and the Church is still intact. And the French Revolution inaugurated the worship of reason on the altar beneath which it imagined it had buried the Bride of Christ; but when the storm had passed and the air been purified her sweet face, illumined by the light of heaven, again shed peace and gladness through the land. And in Germany it was lately proclaimed that in a brief while not a Catholic would be left in all the great empire, and its haughty chancellor boasted defiantly that he would not go to Canossa; but he has gone, and there are some thirteen million Catholics in the empire still. And here in America it was a common saying that the Church could have no enduring life in a country so free and so enlightened; but already she is the greatest religious power in the land, and has not ceased to grow. "When we consider," says Cardinal Newman, "the succession of ages during which the Catholic system has endured, the severity of the trials it has undergone, the sudden and wonderful changes without and within which have befallen it, the incessant mental activity and

the intellectual gifts of its maintainers, the enthusiasm which it has kindled, the fury of the controversies which have been carried on among its professors, the impetuosity of the assaults made upon it, the ever-increasing responsibilities to which it has been committed by the continuous development of its dogmas, it is quite inconceivable that it should not have been broken up and lost, were it a corruption of Christianity. Yet it is still living, if there be a living religion or philosophy in the world; vigorous, energetic, persuasive, progressive; *vires acquirit eundo*; it grows and is not overgrown; it spreads out, yet is not enfeebled; it is ever germinating, yet ever consistent with itself."

We will, therefore, believe in God and in the soul, in Christ and in His Church, and not envy the optimists who believe only in culture and progress, or the pessimists who believe only in despair.

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